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RATHBURN • PLASCENCIA

INVINCIBLE



VOLUME FOURTEEN

THE ULTRONITE WAR



image COMICS PRESENTS

INVINCIBLE

THE ULTRUMITE WAR



CREATED BY
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& CORY WALKER

image®



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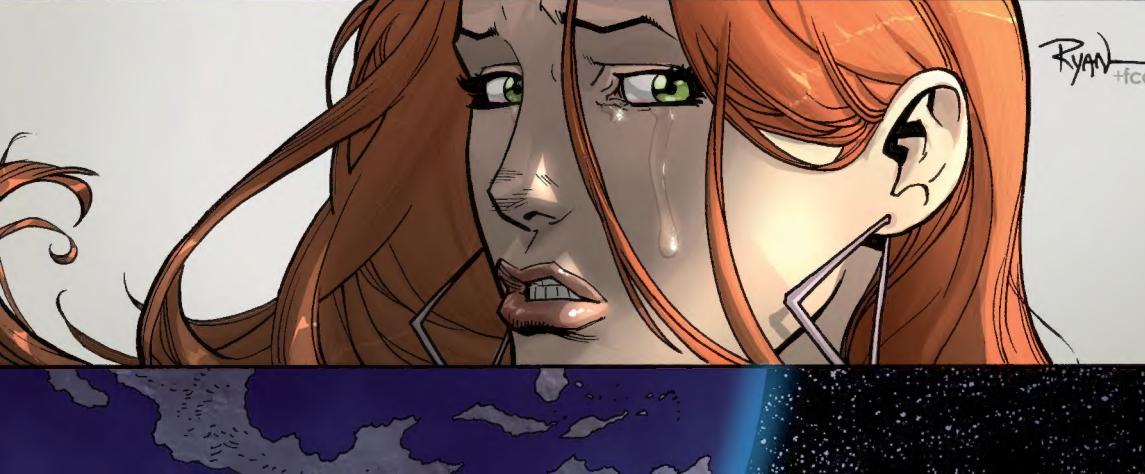
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CHAPTER ONE.

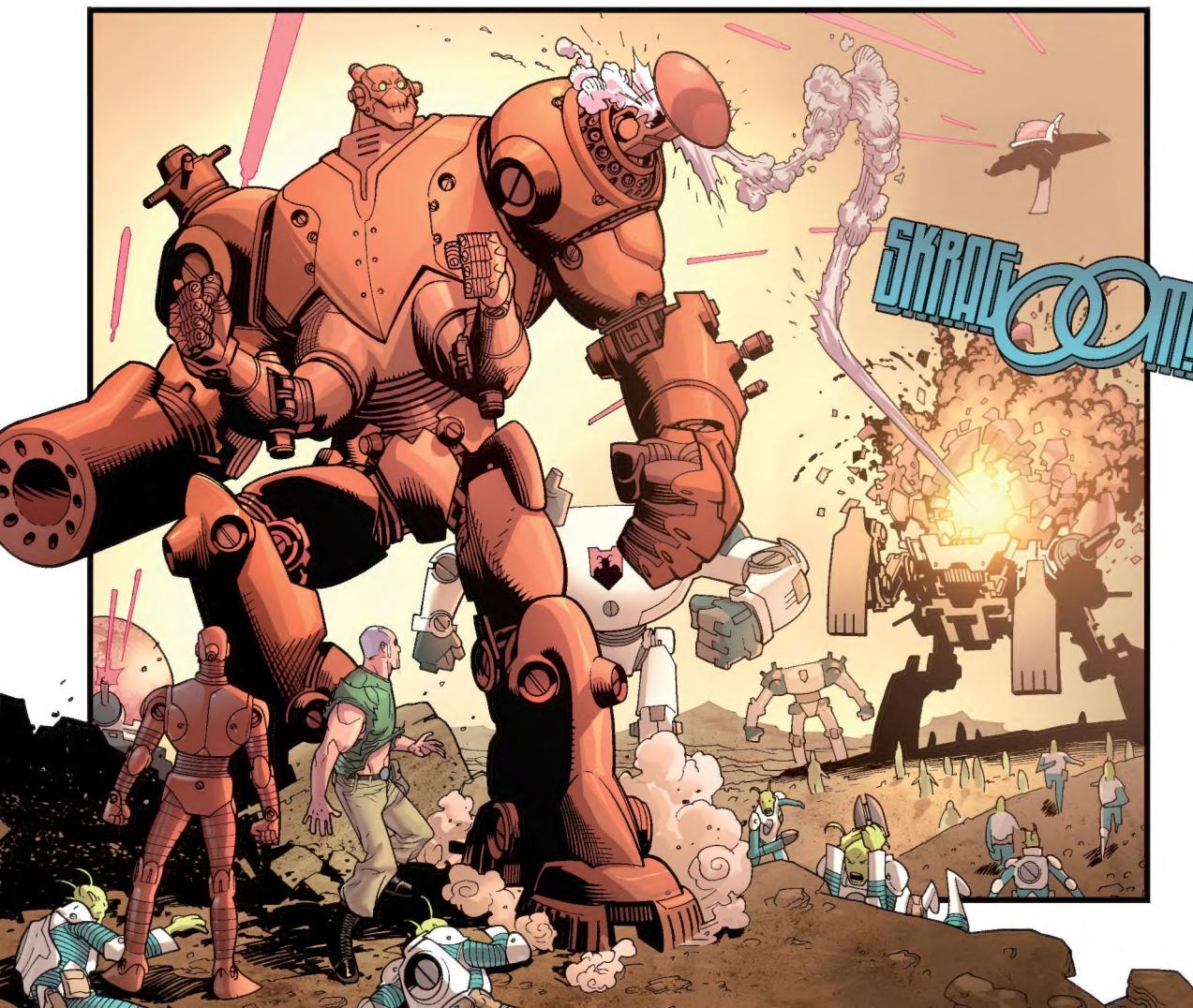
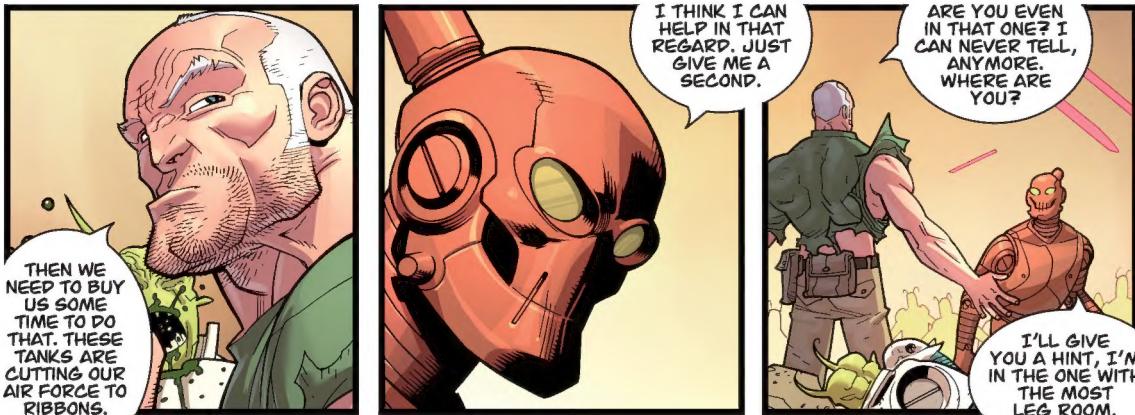


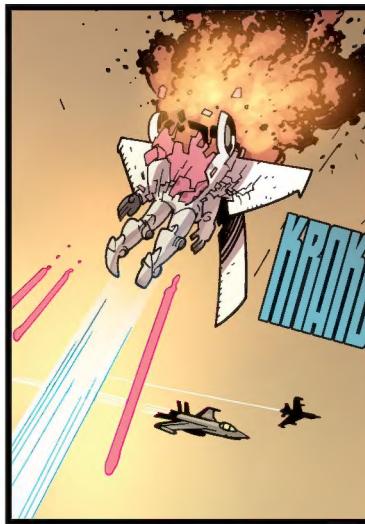


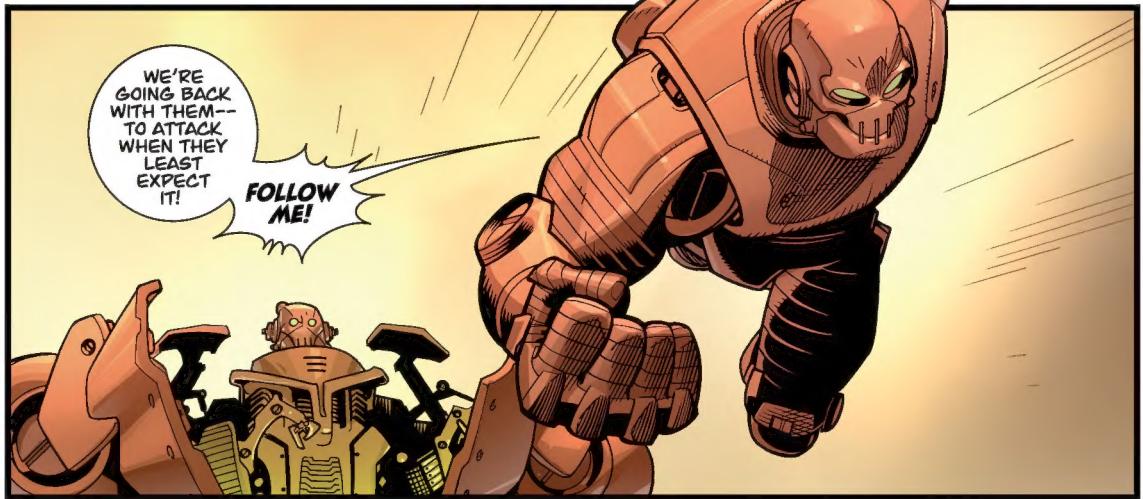
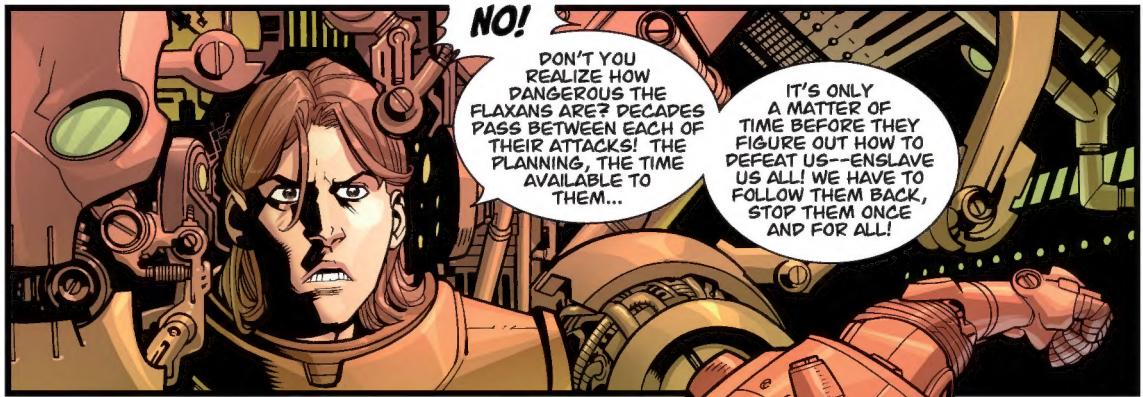
BREEEE!
BREEEE!

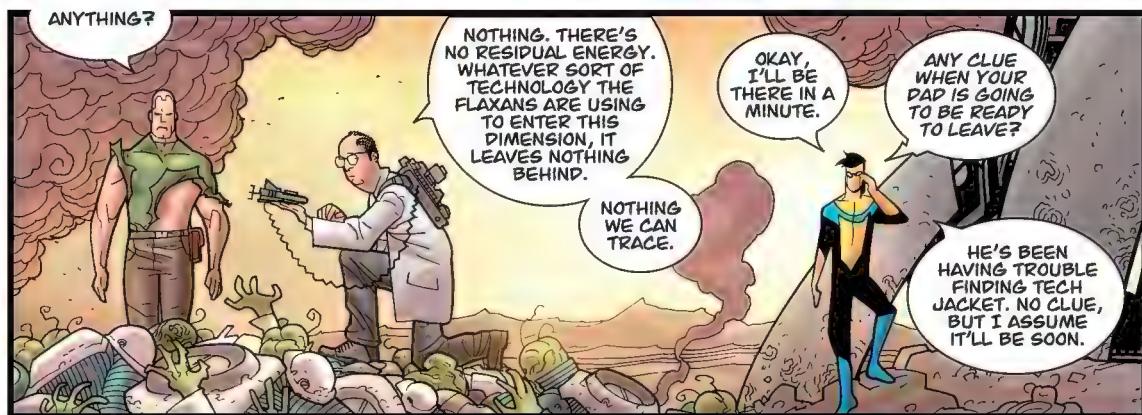
YOU'RE
KIPPING
ME!













WELL, I CERTAINLY DIDN'T THINK IT WOULD TAKE THIS LONG TO FIND THIS TECH JACKET EITHER. HE AND HIS FAMILY JUST DISAPPEARED AT SOME POINT A WHILE BACK.

I WAS ABLE TO DISCOVER THIS HOUSE, OWNED BY THE BOY'S GRANDFATHER. MAYBE HE'LL KNOW WHERE THEY ARE.

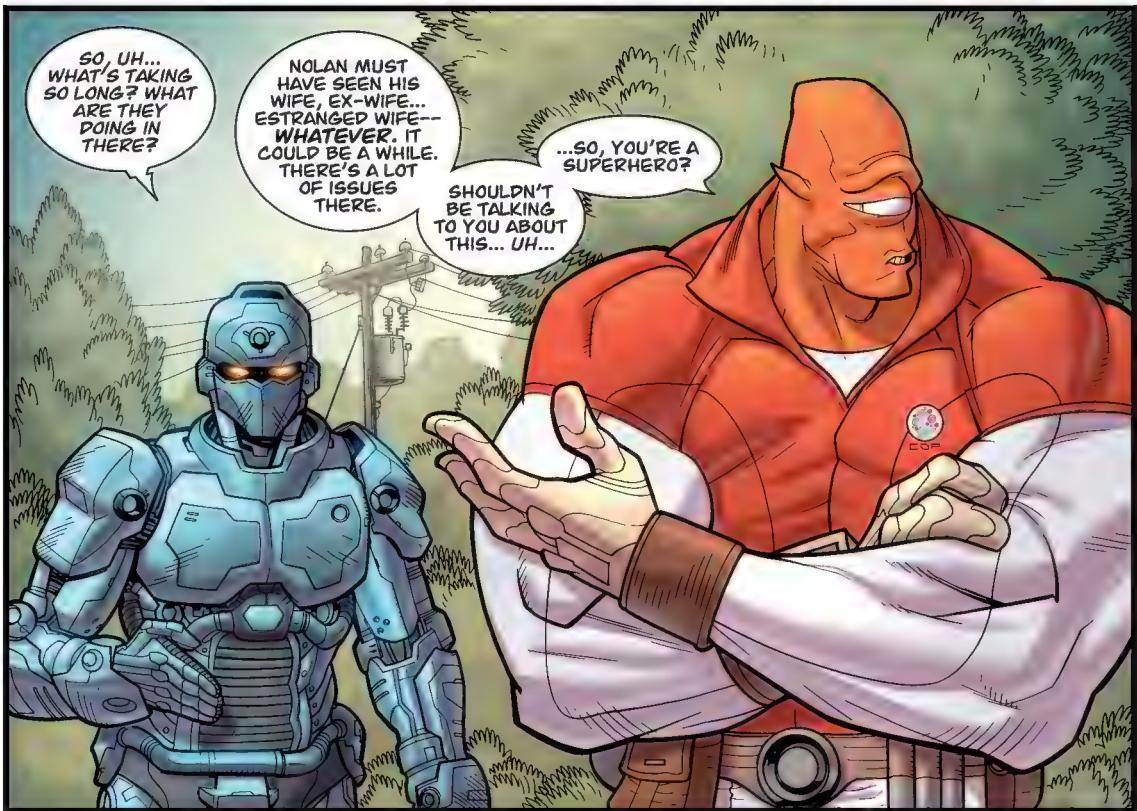
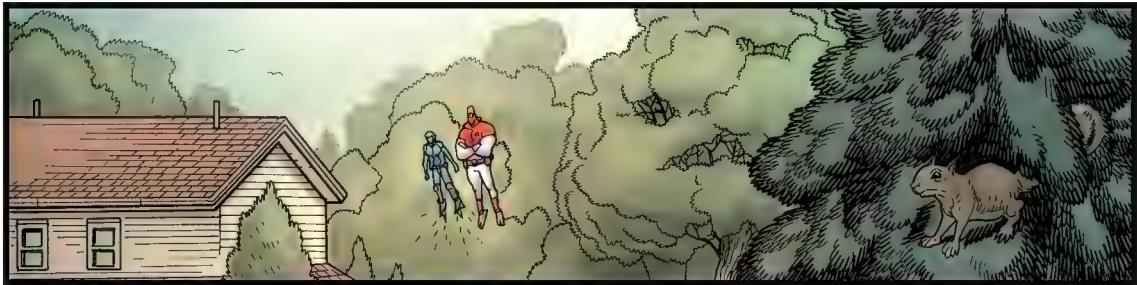
THIS IS OUR LAST CHANCE, IF WE DON'T FIND HIM HERE--I DON'T CARE HOW POWERFUL THE GELDARIANS SAID HE WAS--WE'RE LEAVING WITHOUT HIM.

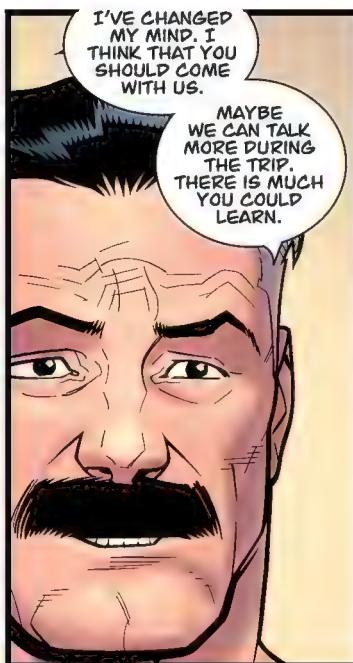
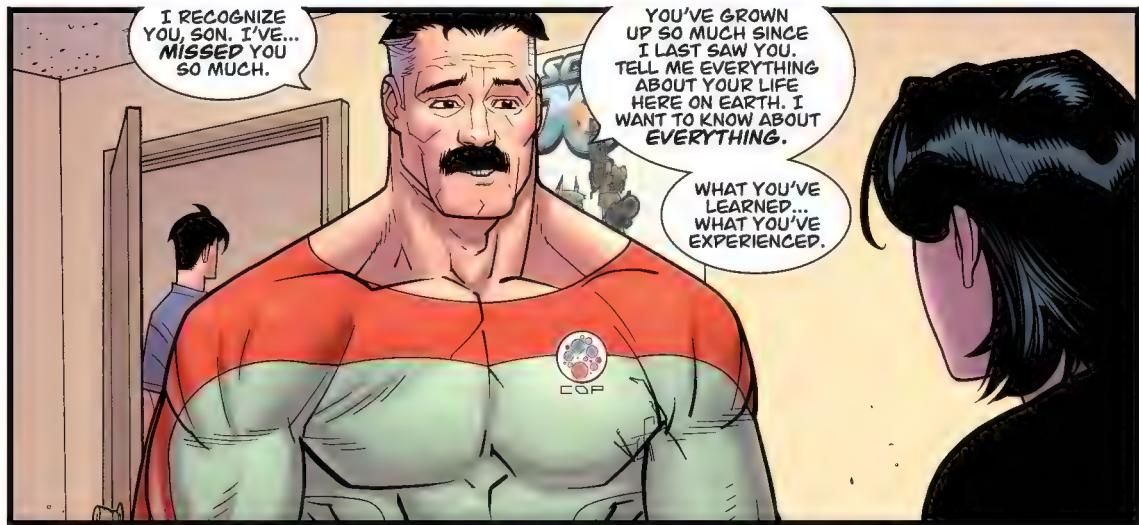




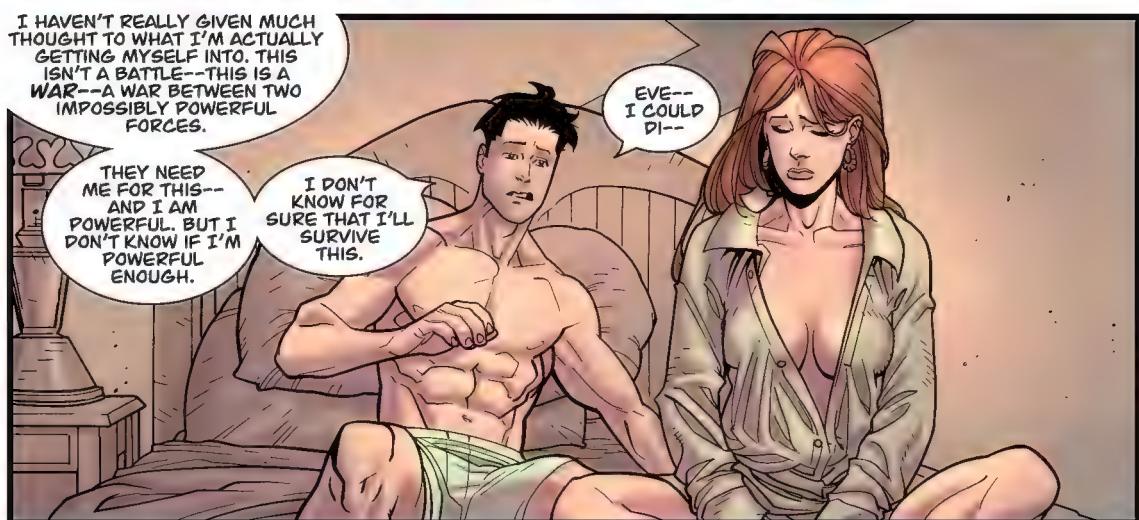
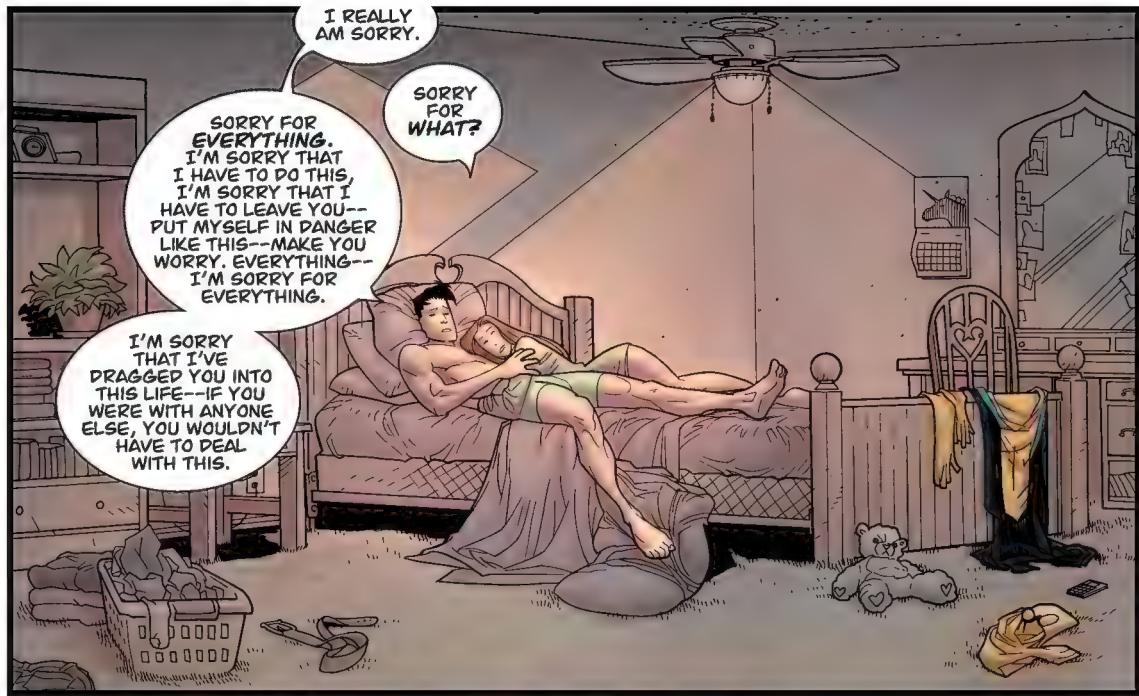




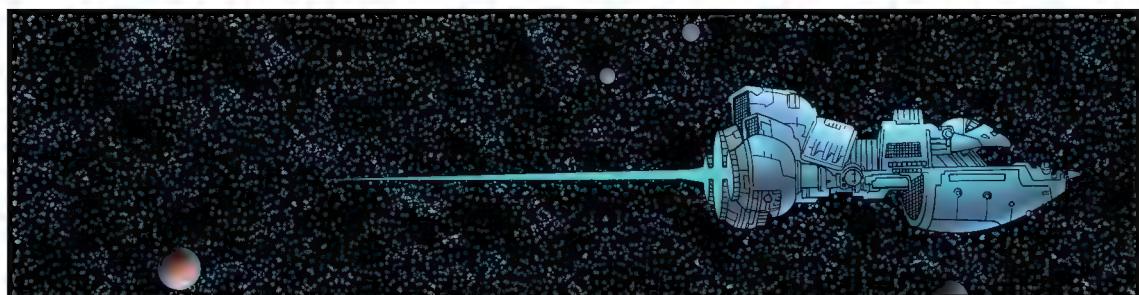
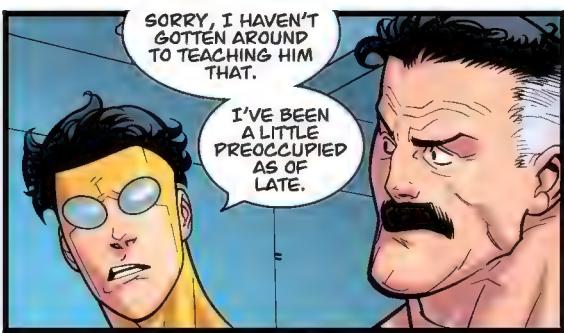
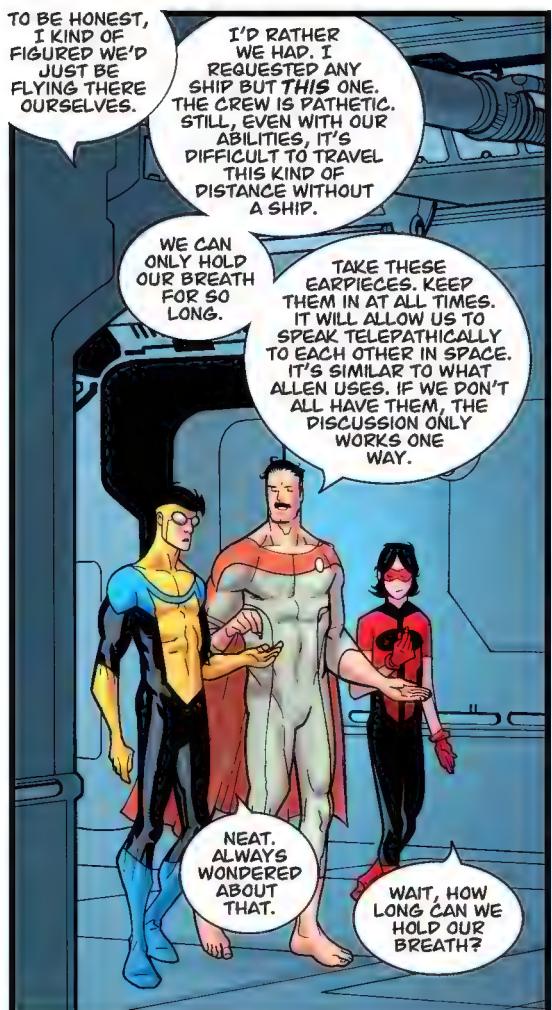
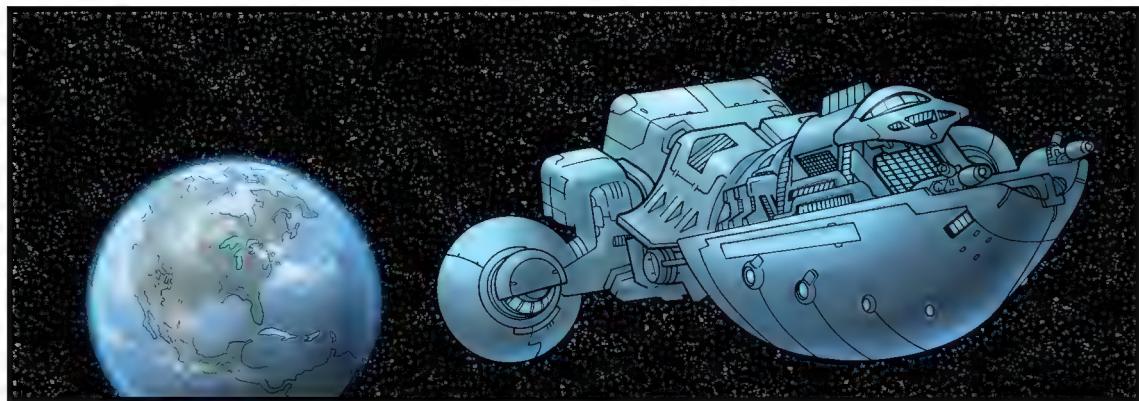


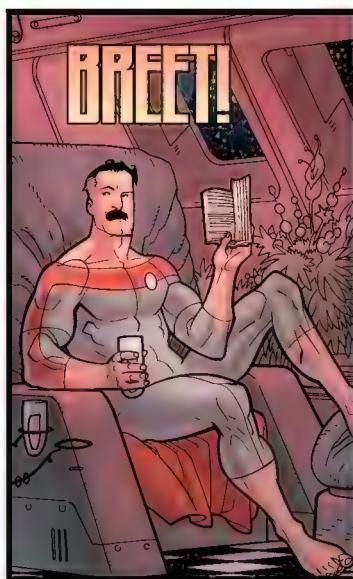
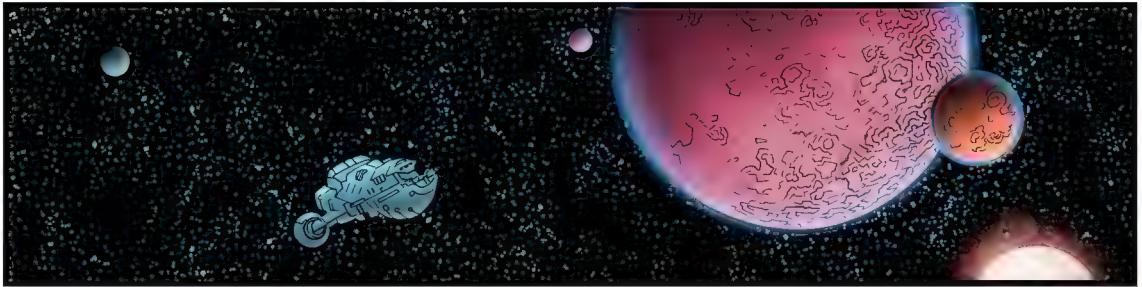




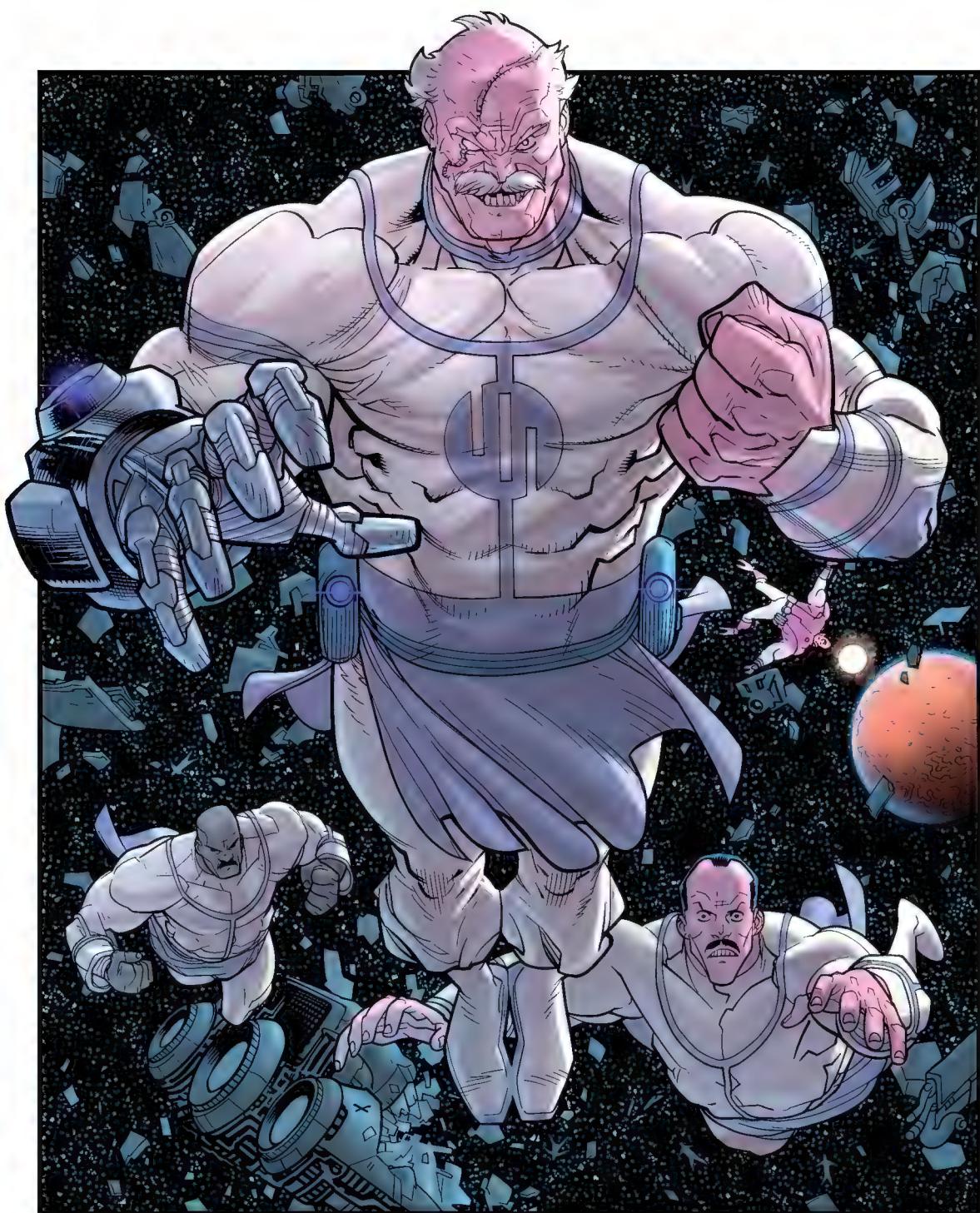










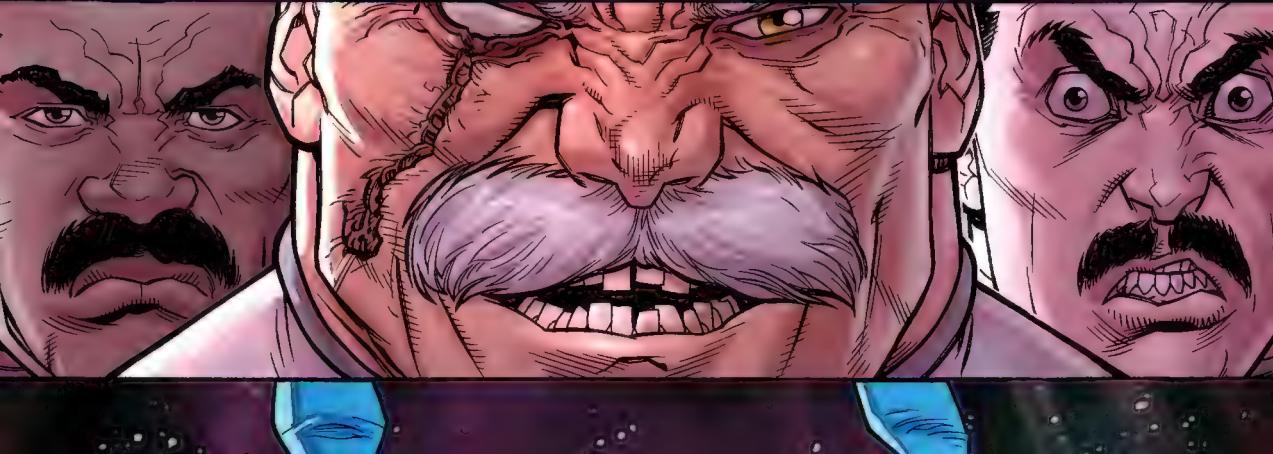


NO.
NOT
HIM.

HOW?



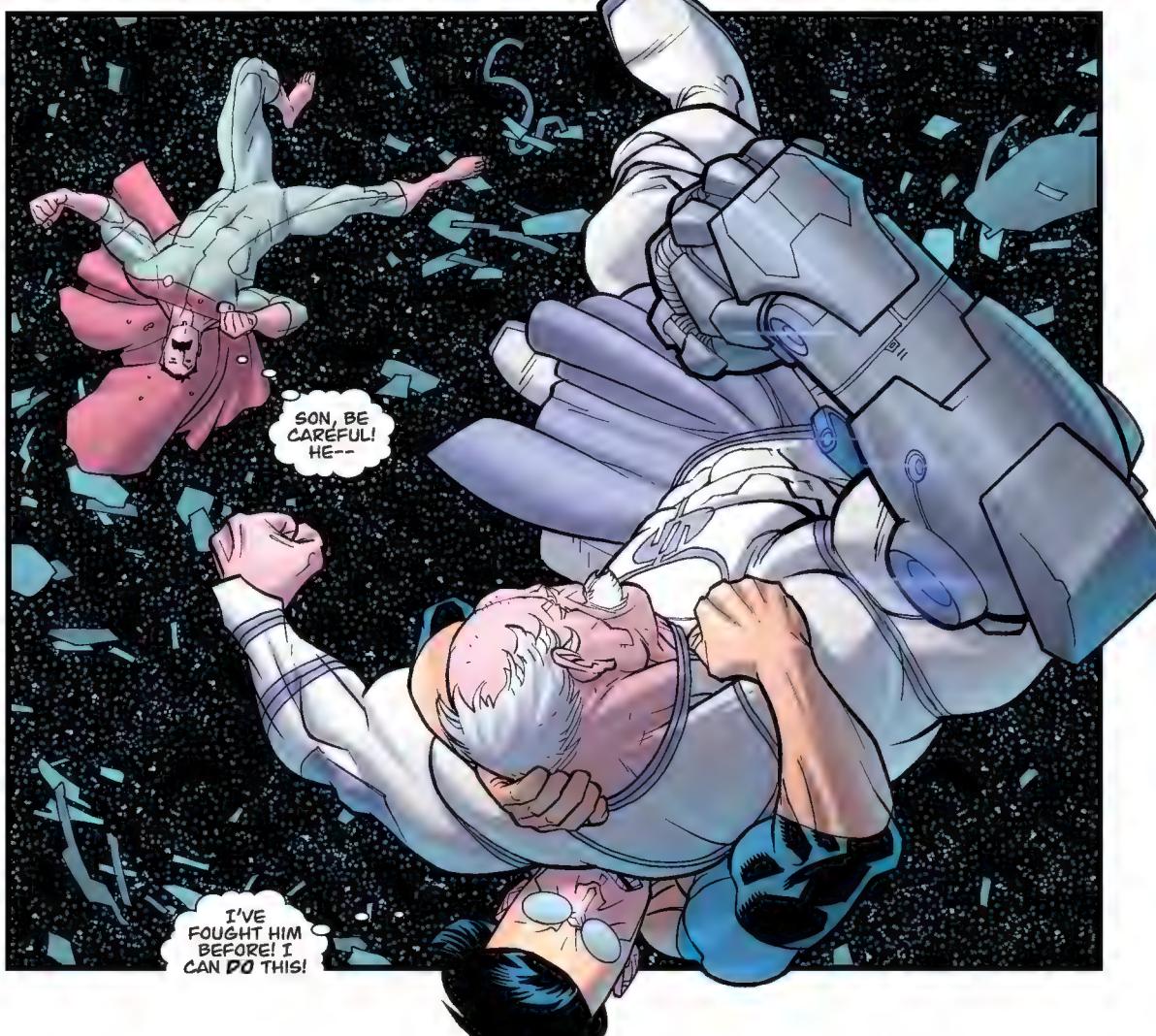
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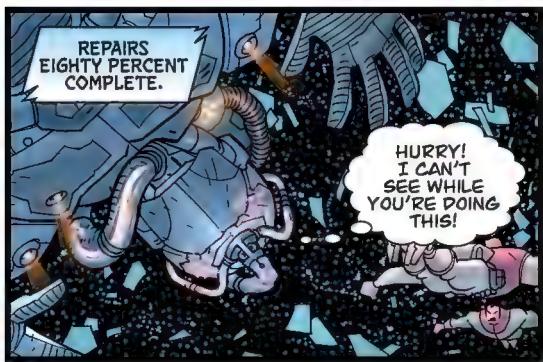












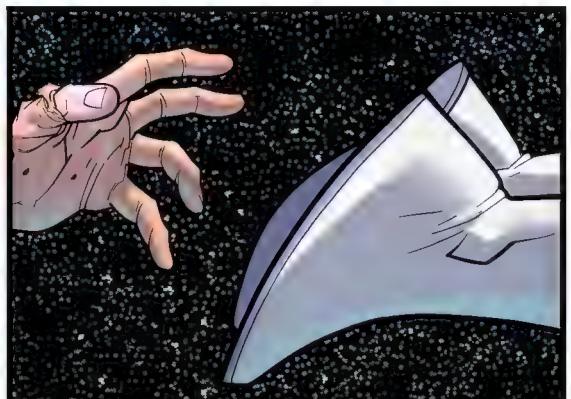


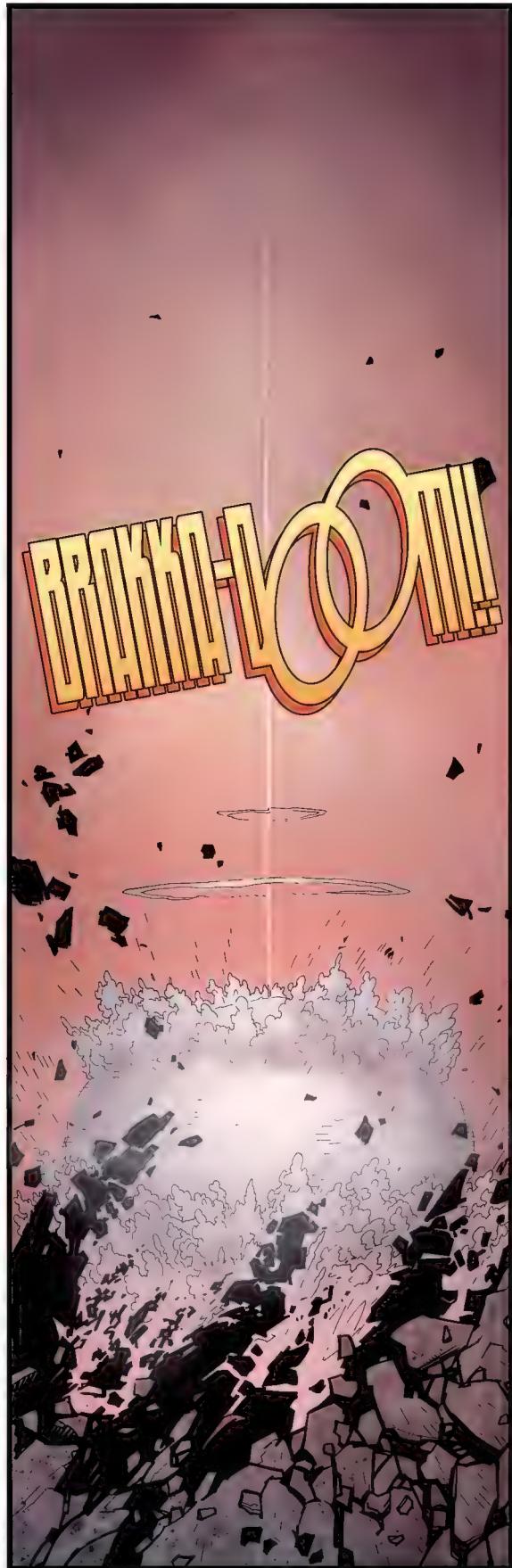


OH.

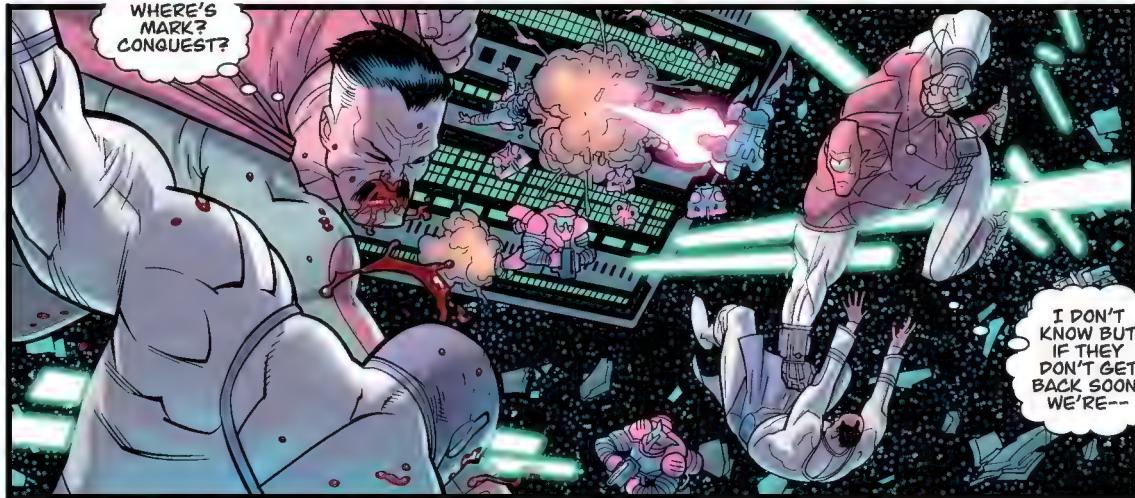
NEVER MIND THEN.

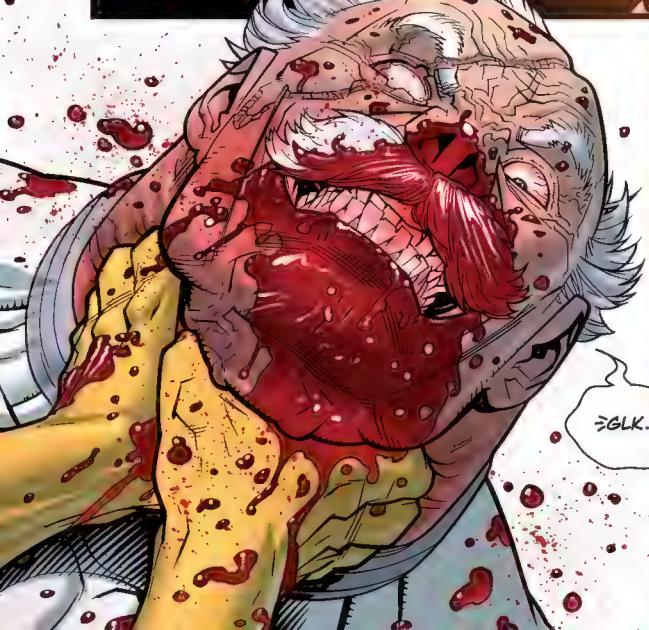


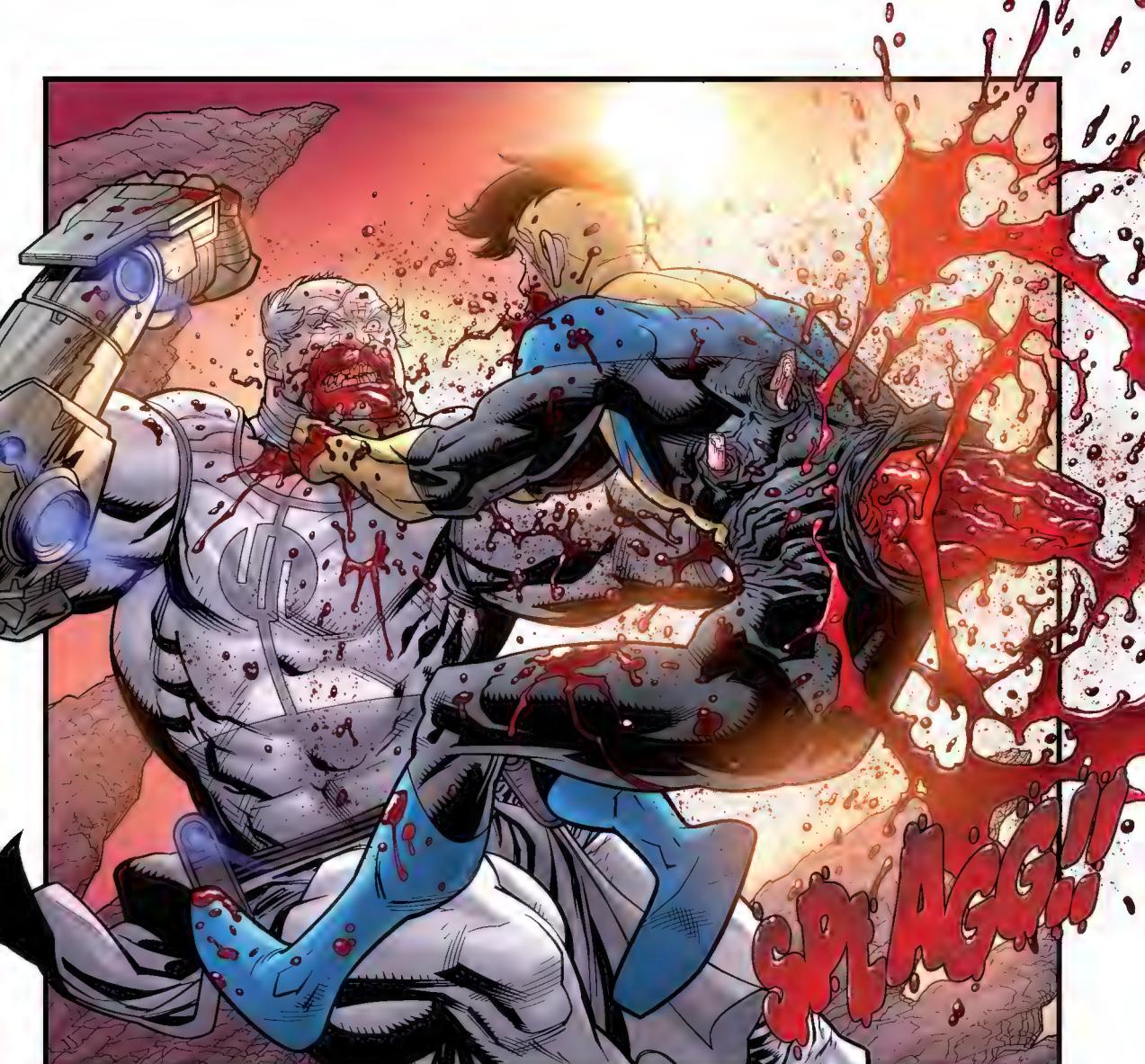




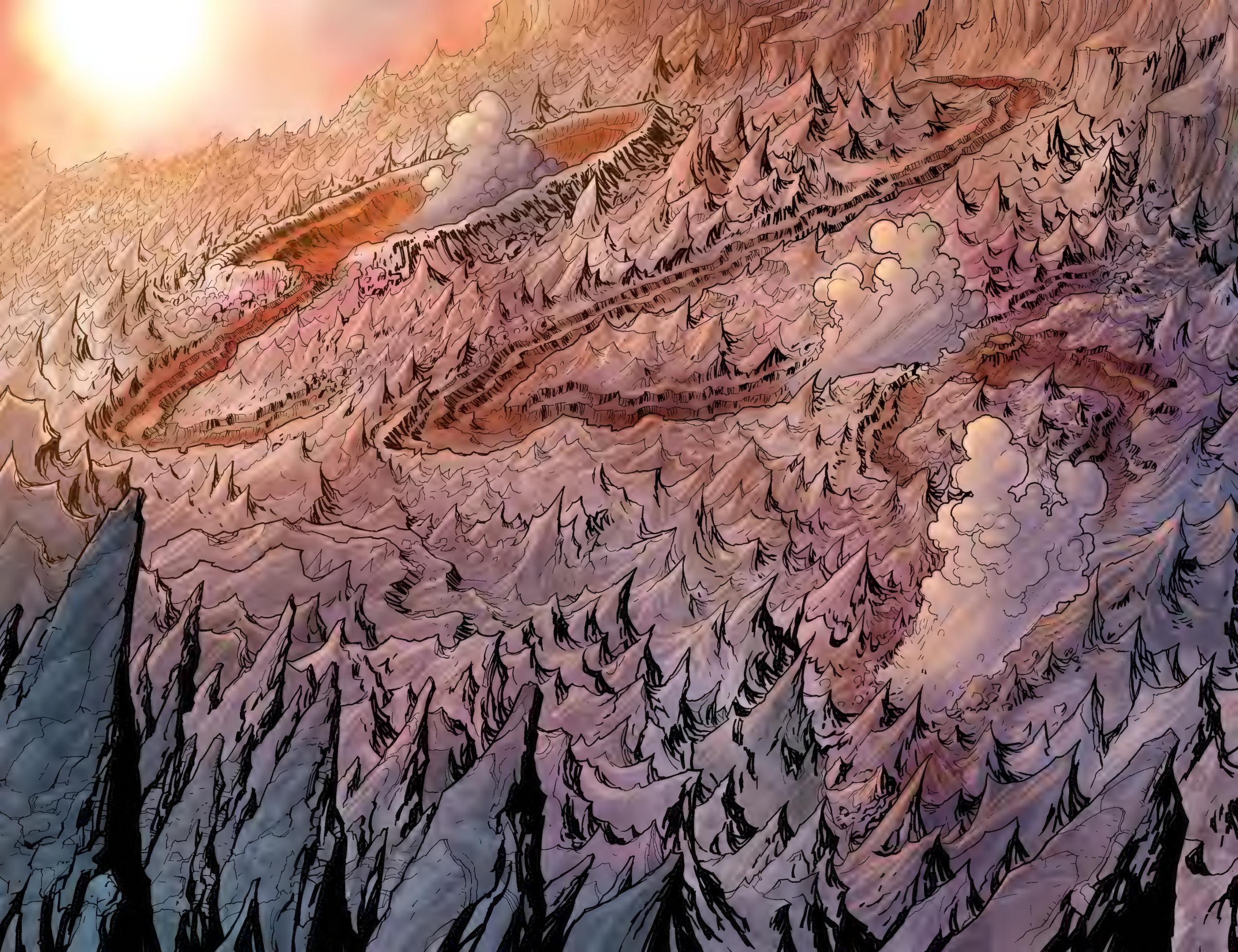














SHUFFLE

SHUFFLE

SHUFFLE

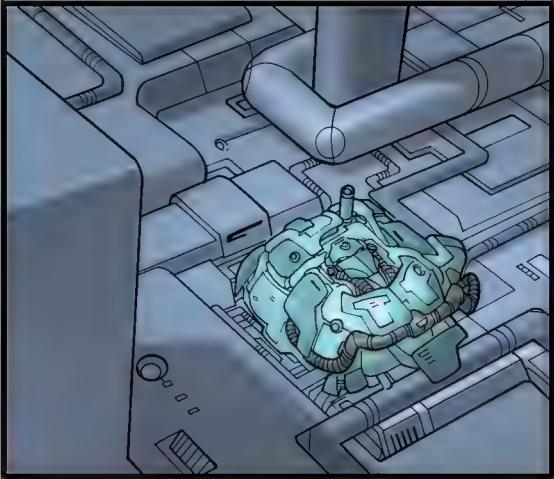
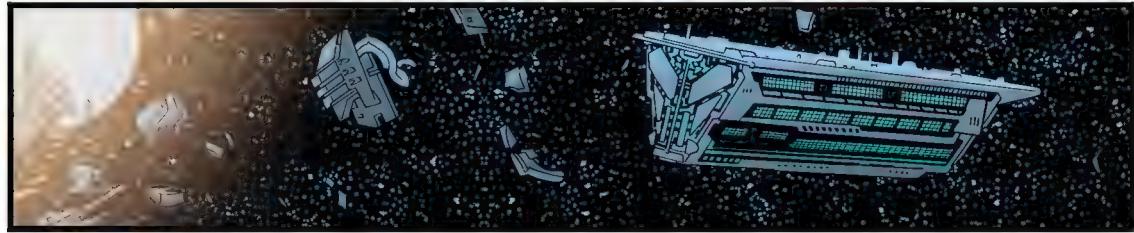
HELP.



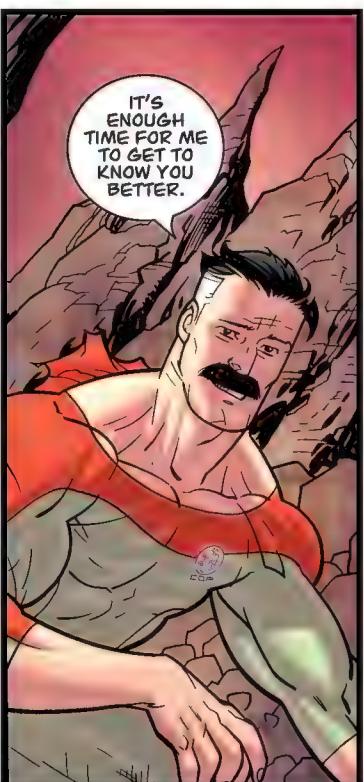
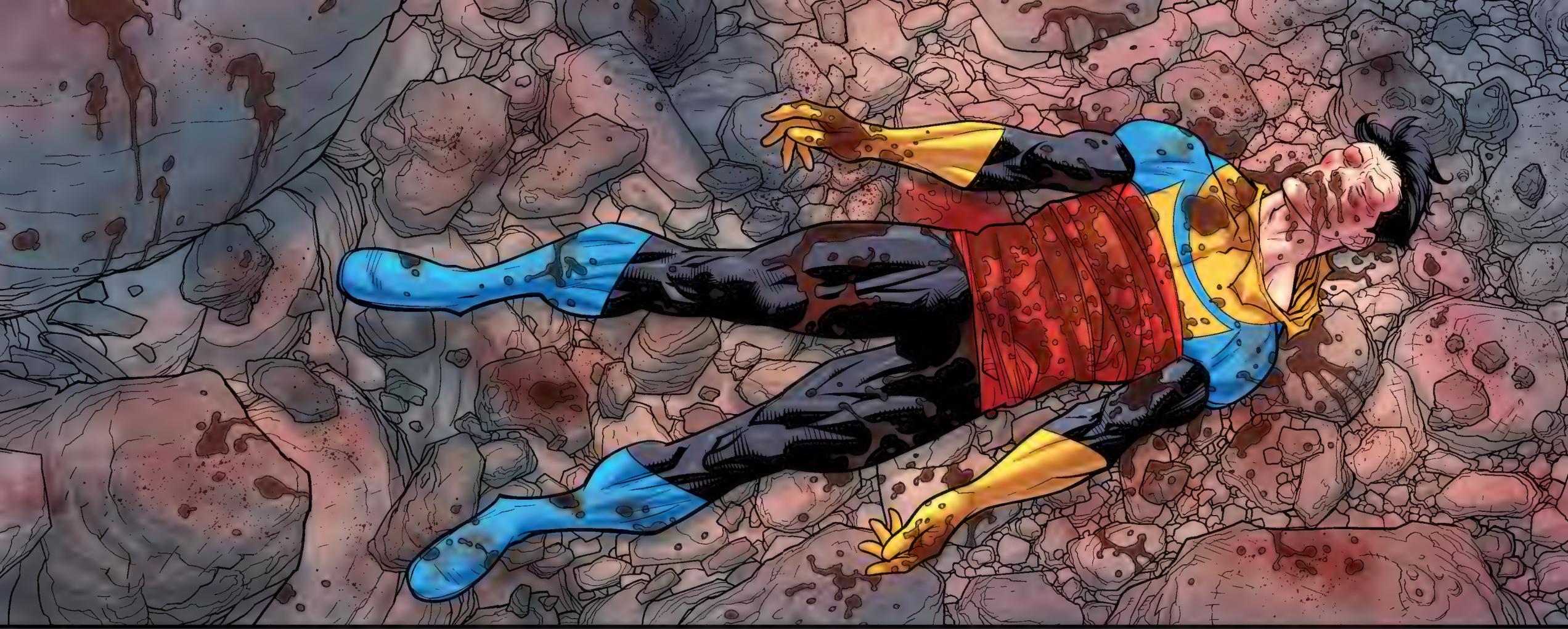
CHAPTER THREE

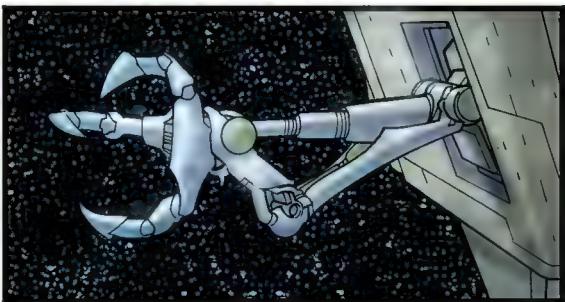




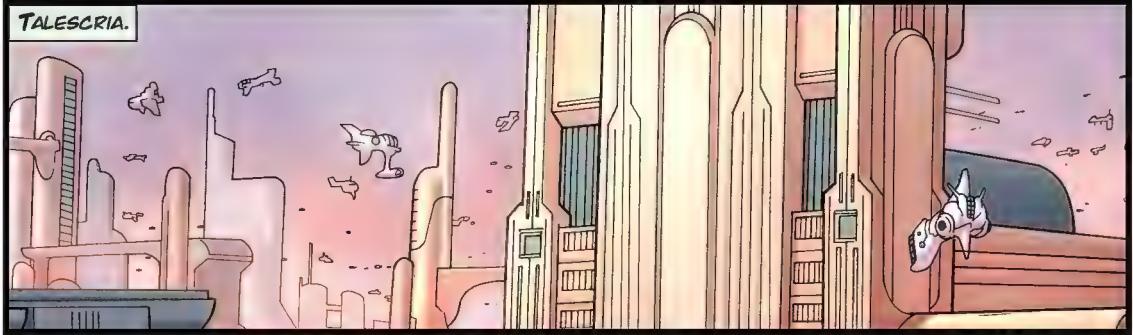








TALES OF TALESCRIA.

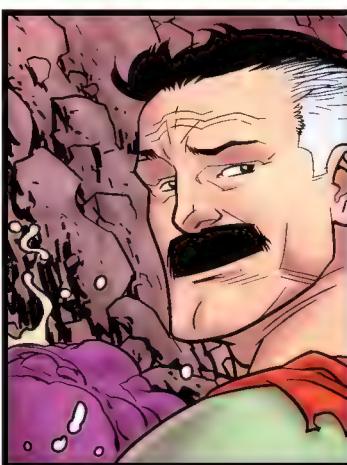


WE'VE BEEN BUSY WHILE NOLAN AND ALLEN WERE ON THEIR MISSION TO EARTH. THE KLAXUS EXTRACT WE HARVESTED FROM THE SINLAK BEETLES HAS BEEN PROVEN EFFECTIVE AGAINST VILTRUMITE TISSUE, AND ALL COALITION TROOPS ARE BEING ARMED WITH KLAXUS EXTRACT-LACED ARMAMENTS.

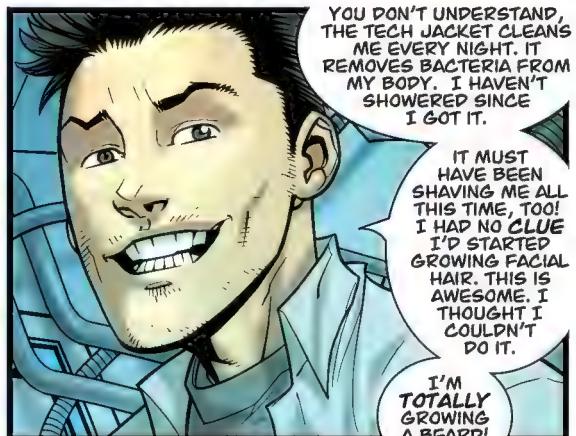
WE STARTED ON THE DRIDELL OUTPOST, WHICH THE COUNCIL AGREED WOULD BE THE BEST STAGING GROUND FOR A FIRST STRIKE AGAINST VILTRUMITE HELD CIVILIZATIONS.



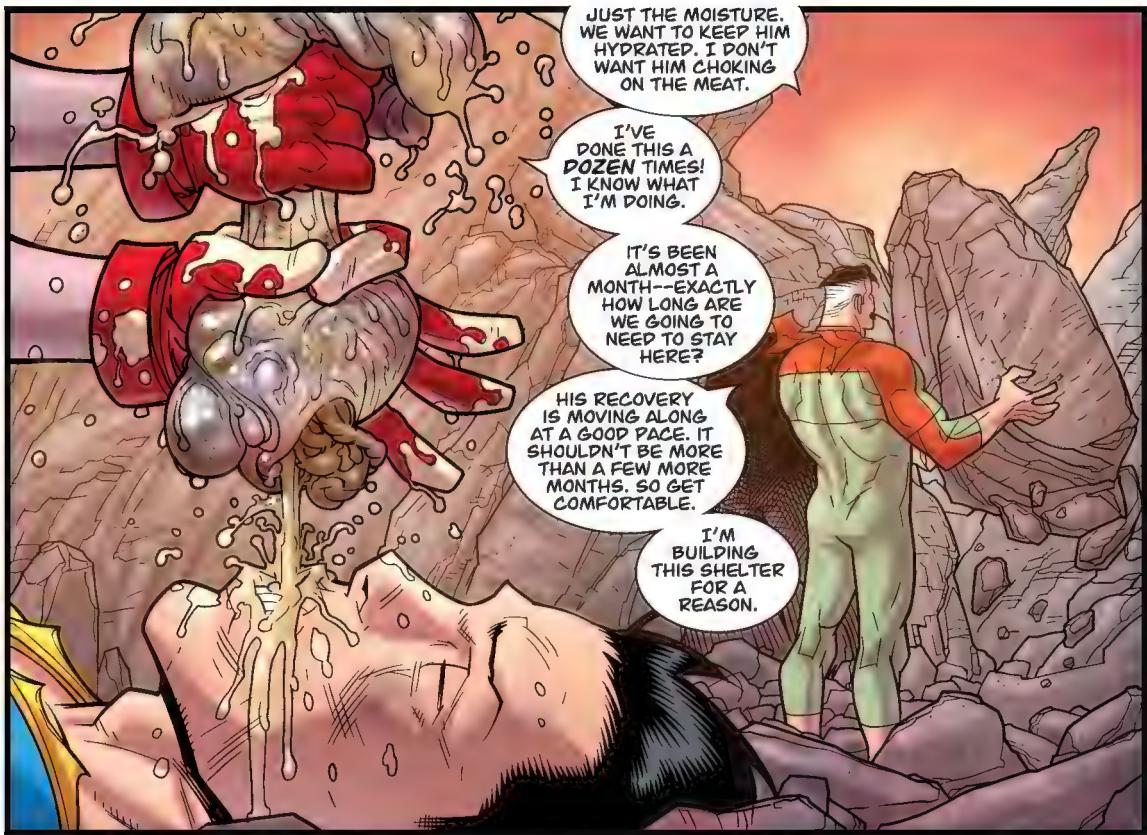






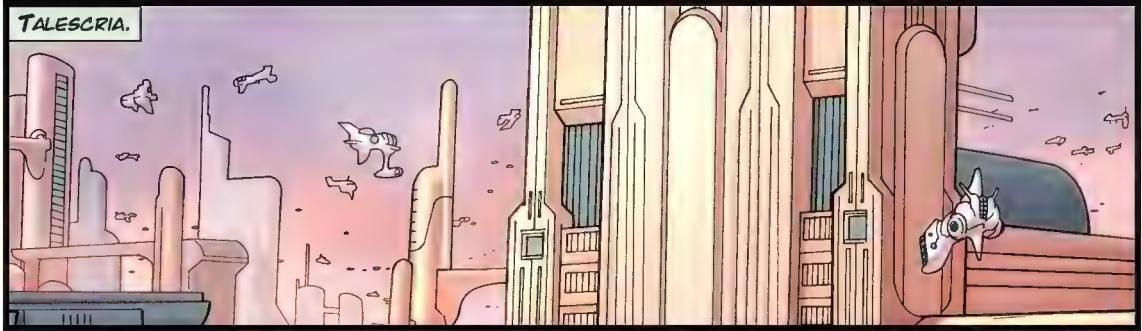








TALES CRIA.



ALLEN, IT IS GOOD TO HAVE YOU BACK. TECH JACKET, IT IS GOOD TO MEET YOU. THE TWO OF YOU WILL BE VERY VALUABLE.

ESPECIALLY WITH THE DISAPPEARANCE OF NOLAN AND HIS SONS... SOMETHING THAT HAS ME VERY TROUBLED.

I'LL NEED THE TWO OF YOU BATTLE-READY IN A FEW HOURS. WE'RE SENDING YOU TO THE PLANET OOLA, WHERE THE VILTRUMITE FORCES HAVE FORTIFIED AN OOLIAN BASE AND ARE EFFECTIVELY DEFENDING AGAINST OUR FORCES.

THE PLANET OOLA WILL MAKE A PERFECT STAGING GROUND TO MOVE OUR FORCES DEEPER INTO VILTRUMITE TERRITORY. IT IS ESSENTIAL TO THE WAR EFFORT.

I HOPE YOUR TIME HIDING ON THAT VILTRUMITE SHIP WASN'T TOO TAXING.

I'M GROWING A BEARD.



I LIKE IT THERE. I DON'T KNOW, IT'S LIKE YOU SAY, THE PEOPLE ARE NICE. THEY CARE FOR EACH OTHER MORE THAN PEOPLE DID ON THRAXA.

YOUR AFFECTION TOWARD MY MOTHER WAS CONSIDERED ODD TO THEM. ALTHOUGH, SHE DIDN'T MIND.

MY MOTHER IS DEAD BY NOW. SOMETIMES I THINK ABOUT THAT AND IT MAKES ME SAD.

THAT'S ONLY NATURAL. I CAN'T SAY I'VE NEVER FOUND MYSELF SADDENED BY HER PASSING.

SHE WAS A GOOD PERSON. HER PEOPLE'S ACCELERATED LIFE-SPANS ARE UNFORTUNATE.

YOU'RE TELLING ME? I WAS A BABY LAST TIME I SAW YOU.

YOU THINK I DON'T THINK ABOUT MY LIFESPAN ALL THE TIME?

DON'T YOU WORRY ABOUT LIFESPAN. YOU'LL PROBABLY OUTLIVE ME. DESPITE YOUR GENETICS-- YOU'LL STILL LIVE CENTURIES.

THE VILTRUMITES STILL VIEW ME AS INFERIOR--THEY WANTED TO KILL ME.

I PLAN TO. WE'LL GET RIGHT ON THAT AS SOON AS MARK IS BACK IN FIGHTING FORM.

YOUR AGE HAS SLOWED CONSIDERABLY. BEFORE, I COULD WATCH YOU CHANGE FROM DAY TO DAY...NOT NOW. YOU'LL BE FINE.

LET'S KICK THOSE GUYS' ASSES.

SPEAKING OF WHICH, WE SHOULD PROBABLY BE GETTING BACK. I DON'T LIKE LEAVING HIM ALONE FOR SO LONG.

WAIT-- THERE'S A NEST RIGHT THERE!

SWEET!





IT'S BELIEVED THAT THE RAGNARR CAN EXIST IN SPACE UNHARMED--SO A TETHER SYSTEM IS BEING DEVELOPED. I'LL LET YOU KNOW WHEN THE SCIENTISTS GET A WORKING PROTOTYPE.

IN OTHER NEWS, THE BEACON LEFT IN THE OCEANS OF LASNEMA HAS DETECTED A FLAUN... LOOKS TO BE A BIG ONE, TOO. NOLAN'S BOOKS SAY THEIR TEETH CAN CUT A VILTRUMITE. I'LL SEND A TEAM OUT TO HARVEST THEM WITHOUT DAMAGING THE ANIMAL.

STILL NO LUCK ON THE SPACE SHARKS, THOUGH.

SPACE WHAT?

DON'T HOLD BACK, JUST--



BATTLE BEAST HAS AGREED TO JOIN OUR RANKS. HE'S ACCOMPANIED A SQUADRON TO THE VILTRUMITE-CONTROLLED PLANET QUINTESSA, DESPITE HIS INITIAL REFUSAL OF ANYTHING HE DEEMED ASSISTANCE.

ENJOY YOUR DOWNTIME. WE NEED YOU BACK ON THE FRONT IN TWENTY-FOUR HOURS.

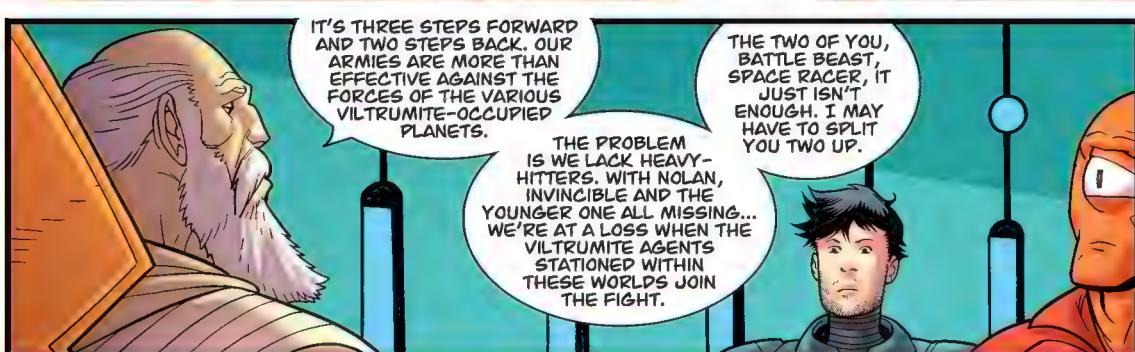
THE KRESH UPRISING ON GELDARIA HAS BEEN QUELLED... BUT UNFORTUNATELY WE DID LOSE CONTROL OF OOLA. LUCKILY, ANOTHER STAGING GROUND HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED ON GLACIA PRIME.



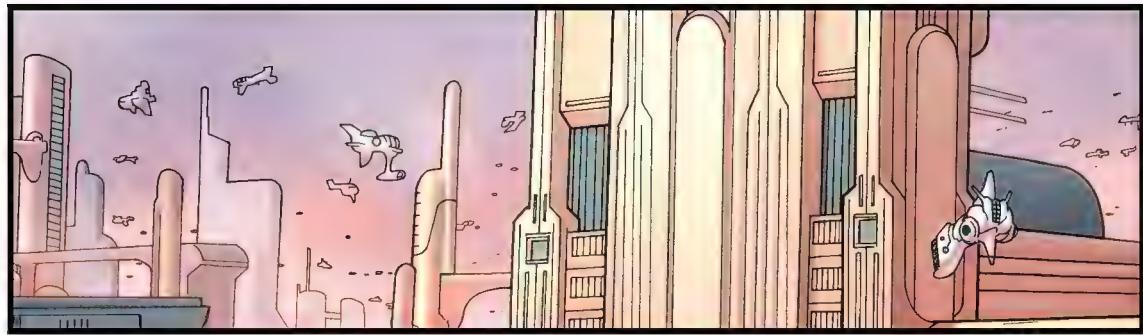
IT'S THREE STEPS FORWARD AND TWO STEPS BACK. OUR ARMIES ARE MORE THAN EFFECTIVE AGAINST THE FORCES OF THE VARIOUS VILTRUMITE-OCCUPIED PLANETS.

THE TWO OF YOU, BATTLE BEAST, SPACE RACER, IT JUST ISN'T ENOUGH. I MAY HAVE TO SPLIT YOU TWO UP.

THE PROBLEM IS WE LACK HEAVY-HITTERS. WITH NOLAN, INVINCIBLE AND THE YOUNGER ONE ALL MISSING... WE'RE AT A LOSS WHEN THE VILTRUMITE AGENTS STATIONED WITHIN THESE WORLDS JOIN THE FIGHT.







THE FIGHTING ON PRAKUS MINOR HAS HALTED FOR THE MOMENT. COMMUNICATION COMING IN FROM GELDARIA INDICATES THINGS ARE QUIET IN THAT QUADRANT.

BATTLE BEAST IS REFUSING A LEAVE PERIOD FOLLOWING HIS VICTORY OVER THE VILTRUMITES ON QUINTESSA. THAT ONE IS VERY DEDICATED.

HELLO?

HOW ARE THINGS ON YOUR END?



YOU'VE BEEN FEEDING US INFORMATION FOR YEARS-- BUT IT'S NOT ENOUGH. WE ARE STILL LOSING PLANETS TO THE COALITION.

THAT IS UNACCEPTABLE.

WE WILL STRIKE THE COALITION HEADQUARTERS ON TALESRIA. YOU WILL SHUT DOWN THEIR DEFENSES AT THE TIME BEING TRANSMITTED TO YOU.

RESPOND.



IT WILL BE DONE.

WHAT? WHAT WILL BE DONE?

WHO ARE YOU TALKING TO?





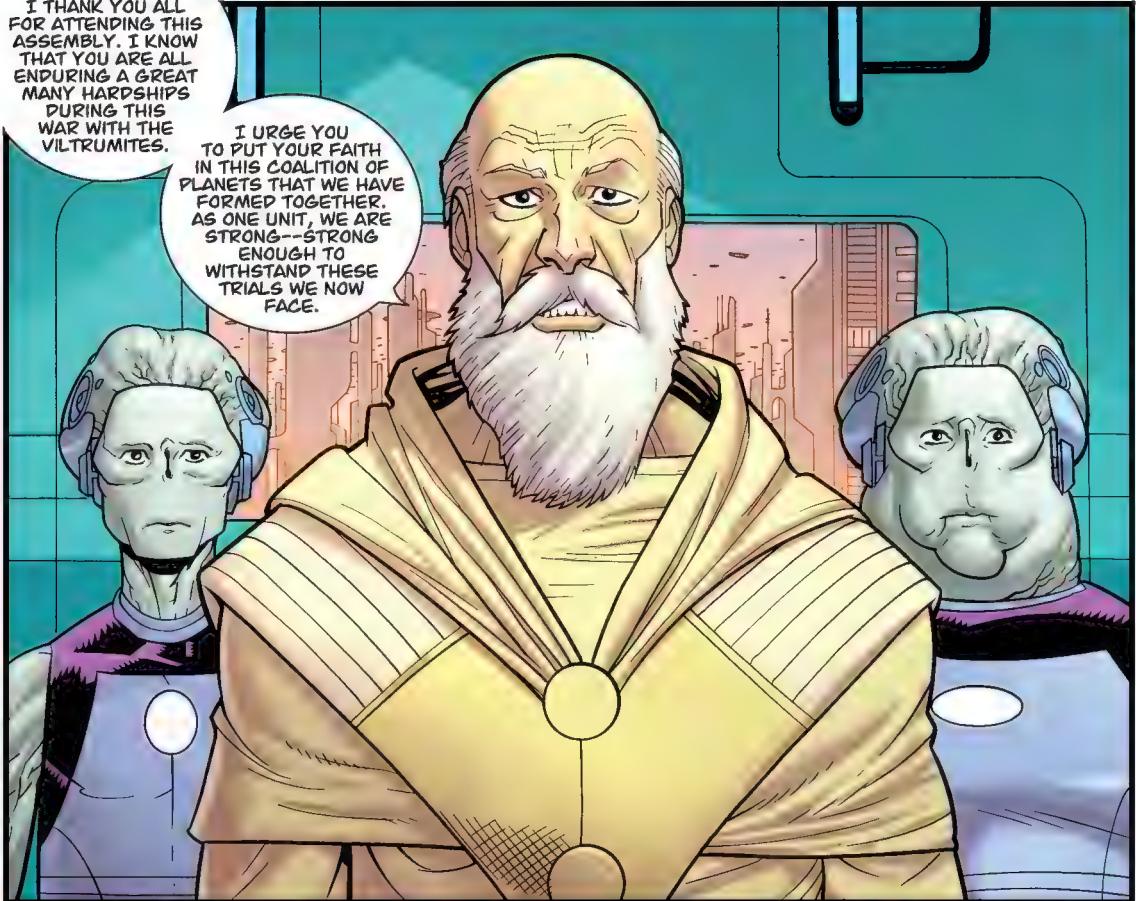
CHAPTER FOUR





TALESCRIA.
I THANK YOU ALL FOR ATTENDING THIS ASSEMBLY. I KNOW THAT YOU ARE ALL ENDURING A GREAT MANY HARSHIPS DURING THIS WAR WITH THE VILTRUMITES.

I URGE YOU TO PUT YOUR FAITH IN THIS COALITION OF PLANETS THAT WE HAVE FORMED TOGETHER. AS ONE UNIT, WE ARE STRONG—STRONG ENOUGH TO WITHSTAND THESE TRIALS WE NOW FACE.



I KNOW SOME OF YOU HAVE QUESTIONED MY JUDGMENT IN STARTING THIS VILTRUMITE WAR... I ASSURE YOU OUR TIME TO STRIKE WAS UPON US.

I CAN NOW REVEAL TO YOU THAT THE VILTRUM AGENT KNOWN AS NOLAN HAS DEFECTED AND WAS WORKING WITH US, GATHERING ITEMS KNOWN TO BE CAPABLE OF INJURING VILTRUMITES.



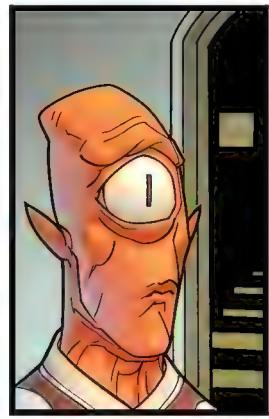
YOUR ARMIES HAVE BEEN EQUIPPED WITH WEAPONS DEVELOPED USING THESE ITEMS THAT HAVE BEEN RECOVERED. THAT IS HOW WE'VE BEEN ABLE TO HOLD THE VILTRUMITE FORCES AT BAY.

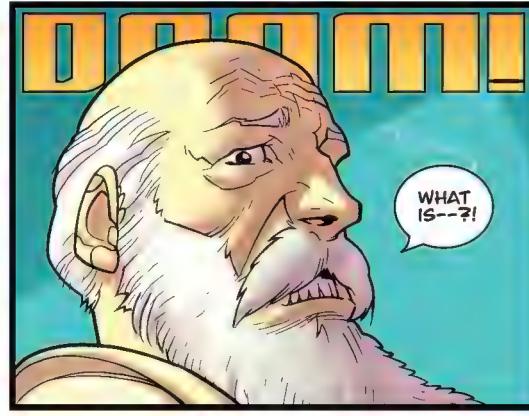
I REGRET TO INFORM YOU THAT THE LYNCHPIN OF OUR PLAN, NOLAN AND HIS TWO VILTRUMITE SONS, HAVE GONE MISSING, AND WILL NOT BE PROVIDING US WITH THE ASSISTANCE WE WERE COUNTING ON.

BUT FEAR NOT, AS LONG AS WE CONTINUE TO WORK TOGETHER, AS A UNIFIED FRONT AGAINST THE VILTRUMITES-- WE WILL SUCCEED.

WE WILL FINALLY RID THE UNIVERSE OF THIS SCOURGE ONCE AND FOR ALL.

WE--





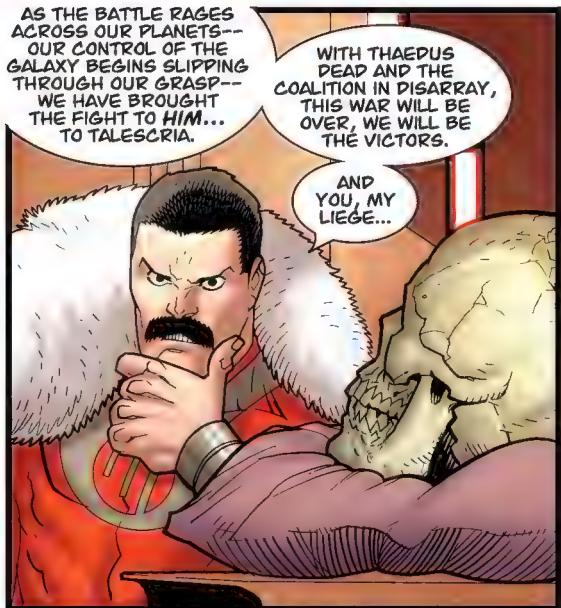
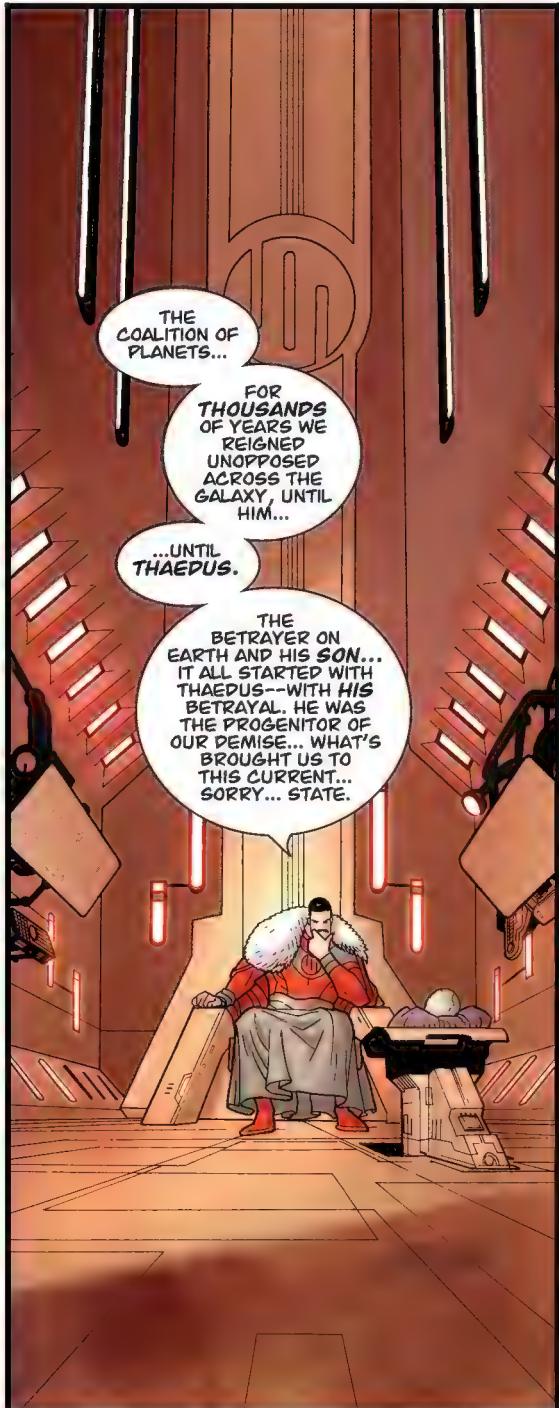








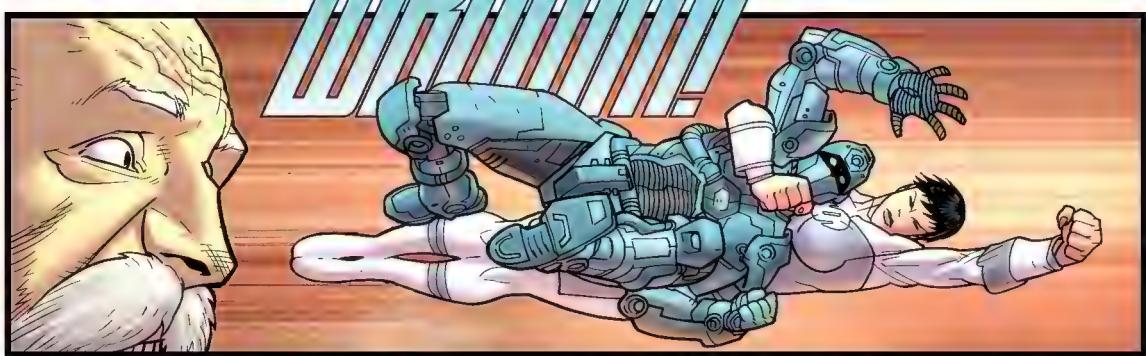






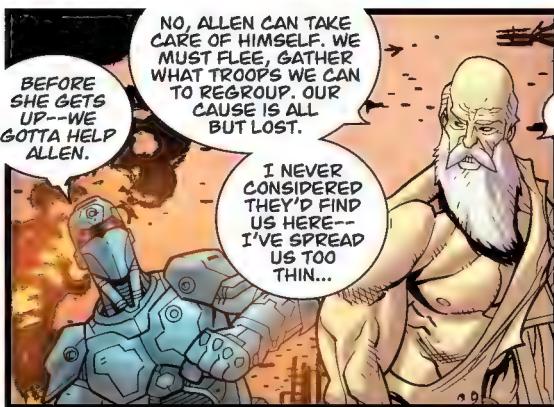






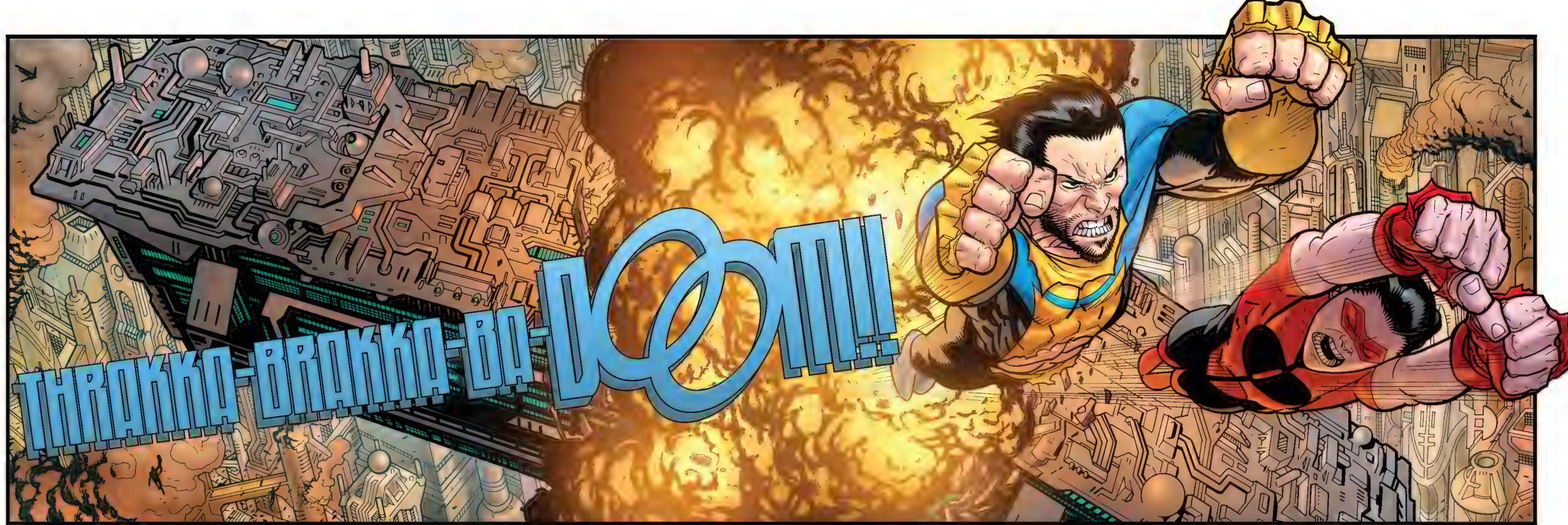
I'LL SEE YOUR
WEAK BODY
SPILL THROUGH
THE SEAMS
OF YOUR
TECHNOLOGY,
GELDARIAN!

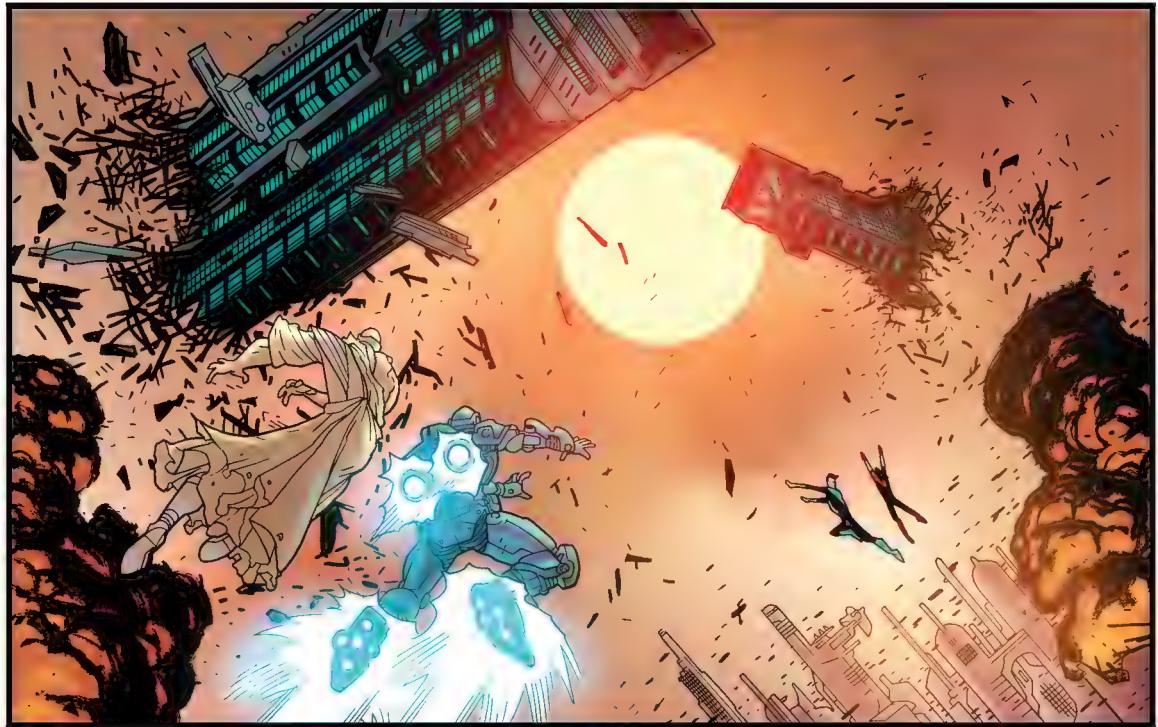
EXTERIOR PRESSURE
AT 90% CAPACITY,
BREACH IMMINENT.













VZAMM!



LOOK WHAT YOU MADE! TALK! TELL ME WHAT THE VILTRUMITES' PLANS ARE! TELL ME EVERYTHING YOU KNOW.



ENOUGH.

LOOK WHAT YOU'VE DONE-- YOU BROUGHT THEM HERE, YOU CAUSED THIS DESTRUCTION--YOU'VE BETRAYED US ALL.

YOU WILL PAY FOR THESE CRIMES--BUT FIRST, TELL US WHERE THE VILTRUMITES ARE GOING--RIGHT NOW.



DOESN'T MATTER NOW--DOESN'T MATTER AT ALL.

IT'S TOO LATE, YOU'VE GOT NO HOPE OF WINNING THIS WAR. THEY SAID-- THEY--

IF THIS BATTLE WAS LOST, THEY WERE TO RECONVENE ON THE PLANET VILTRUM TO STAGE A COUNTER-ATTACK.

YOU DON'T STAND A CHANCE. THEY'RE ALL GOING THERE--

ALL OF THEM.

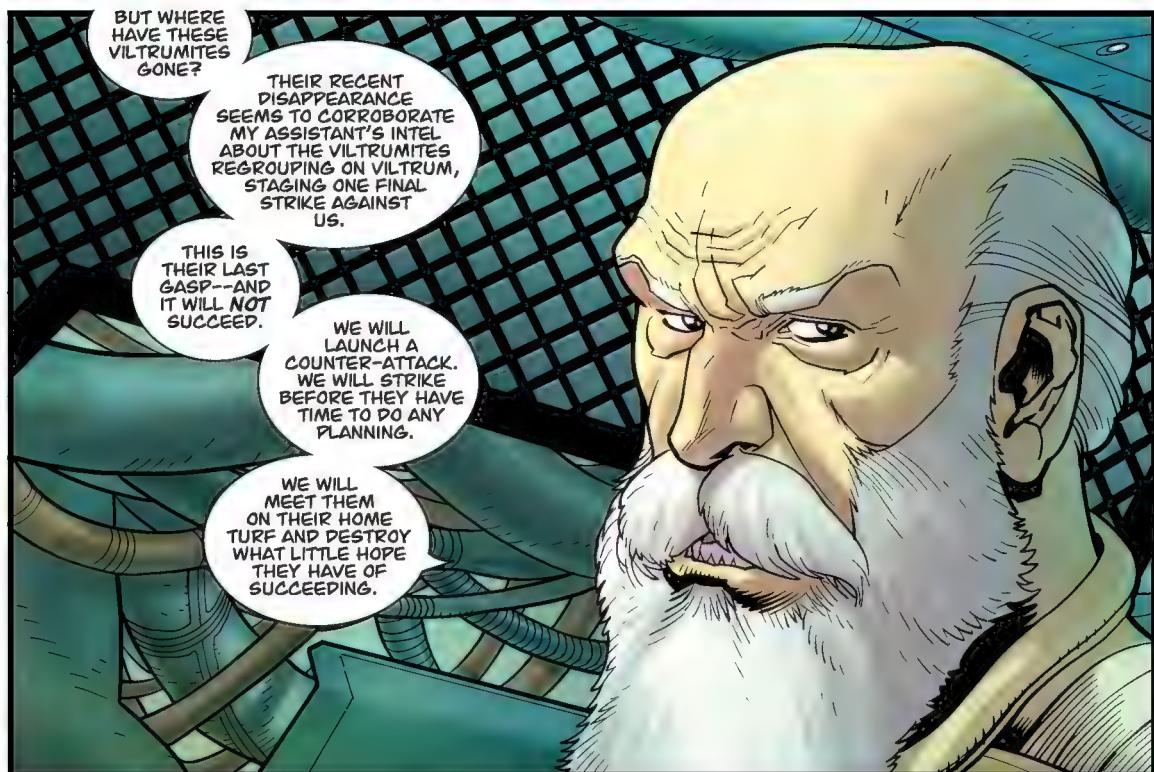
IT'S OVER.





CHAPTER FIVE

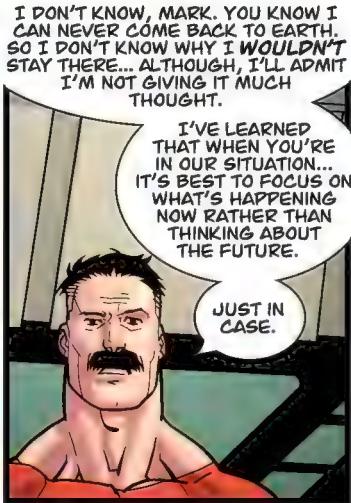


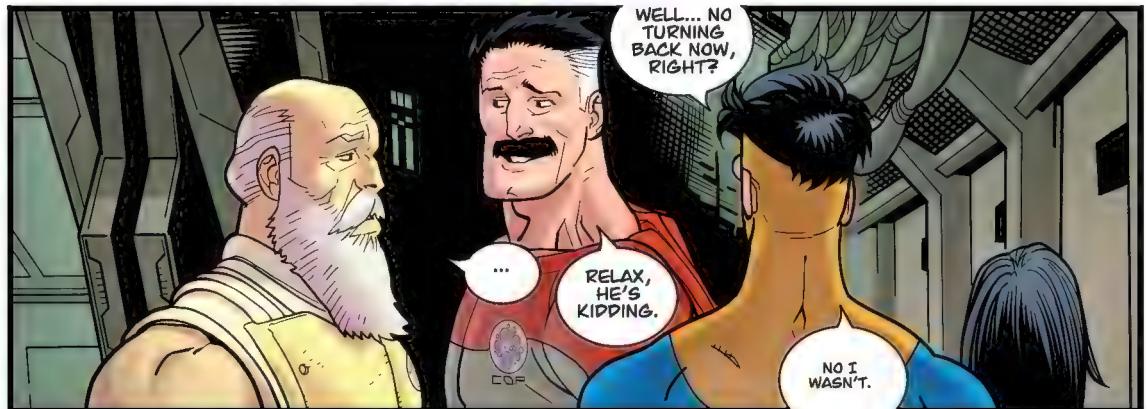


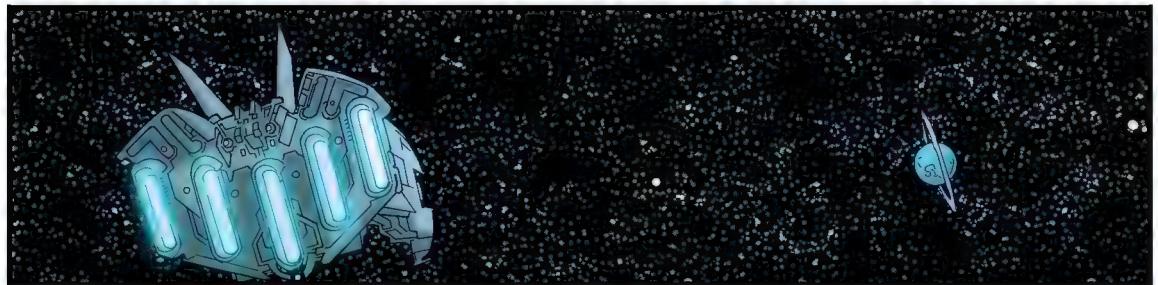


ARE YOU
READY
TO FINISH
THIS?

HELL
YEAH!











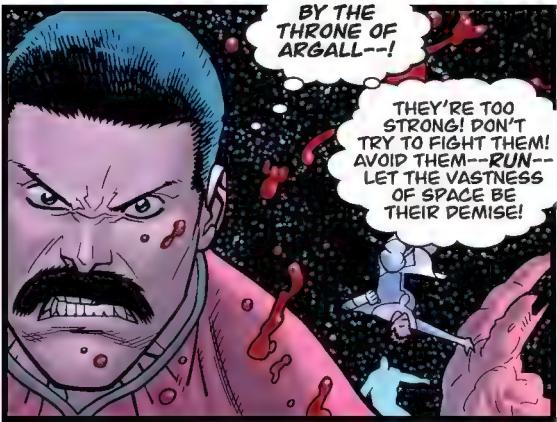
TO ALL
WHO MAKE
THEMSELVES
ENEMIES OF
THE VILTRUM
EMPIRE--!

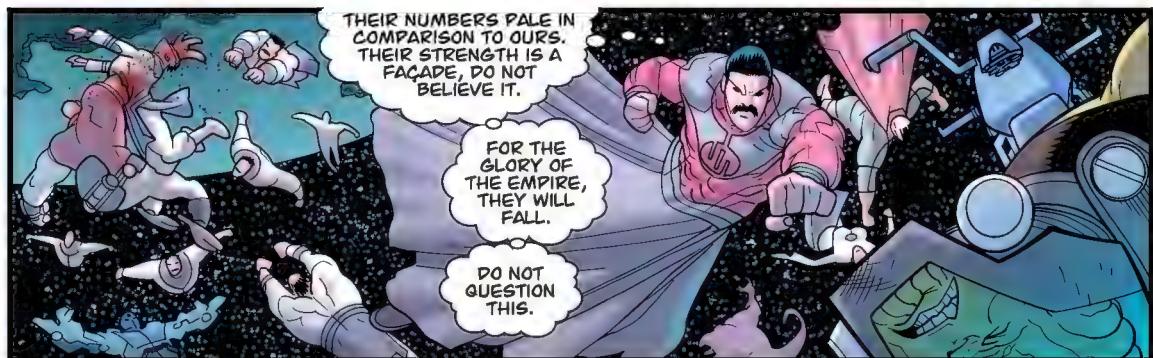
PREPARE
FOR YOUR
DEATHS!

WE ARE GROSSLY
OUT-NUMBERED...
MOVE FAST FROM
OPPONENT TO OPPONENT.
TRY NOT TO LET THEM
OVERPOWER YOU--WE'RE
GOING TO NEED TO MOVE
QUICKLY IF WE'RE TO
SURVIVE THIS.

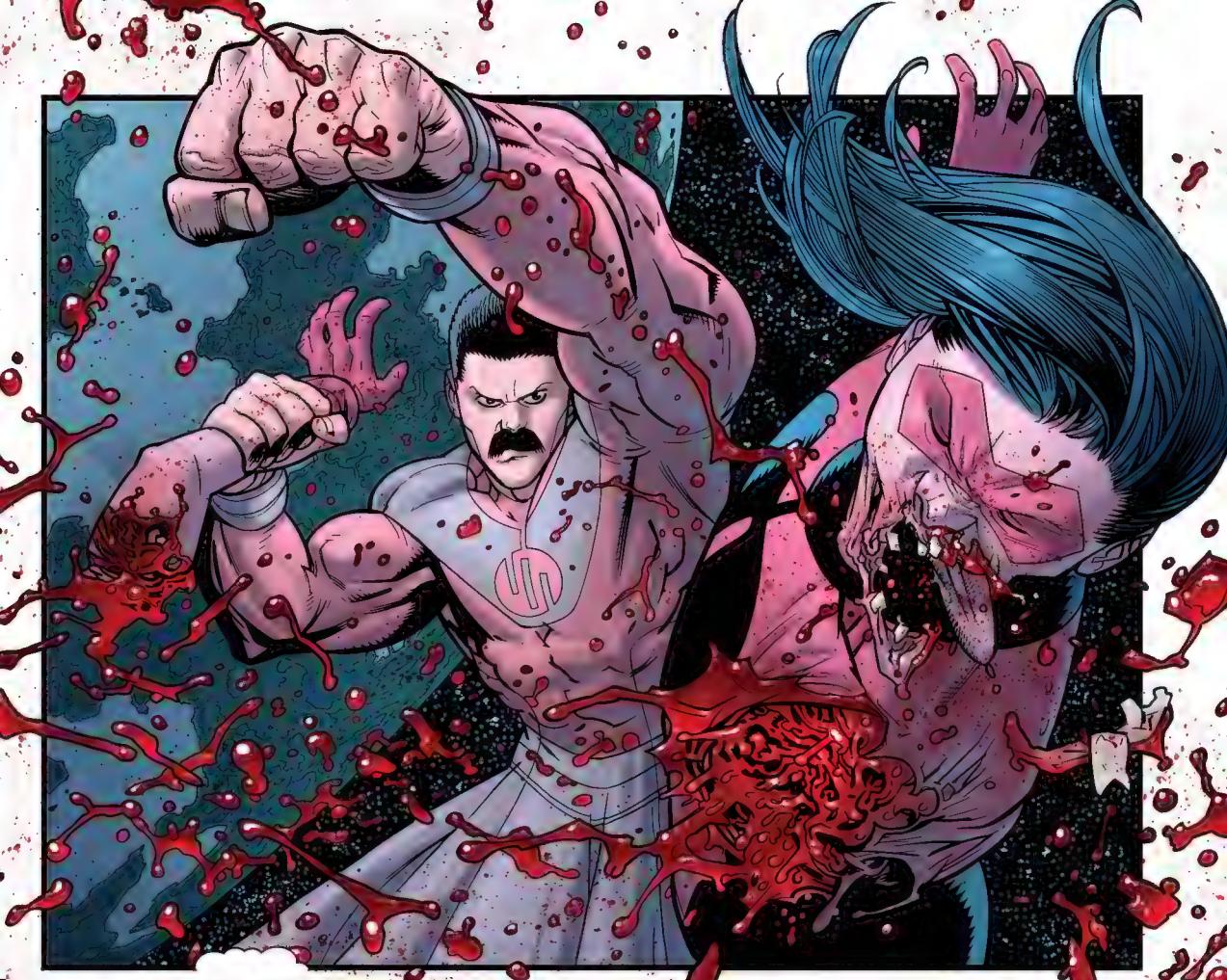
IF ONLY
SPACE
RACER COULD--













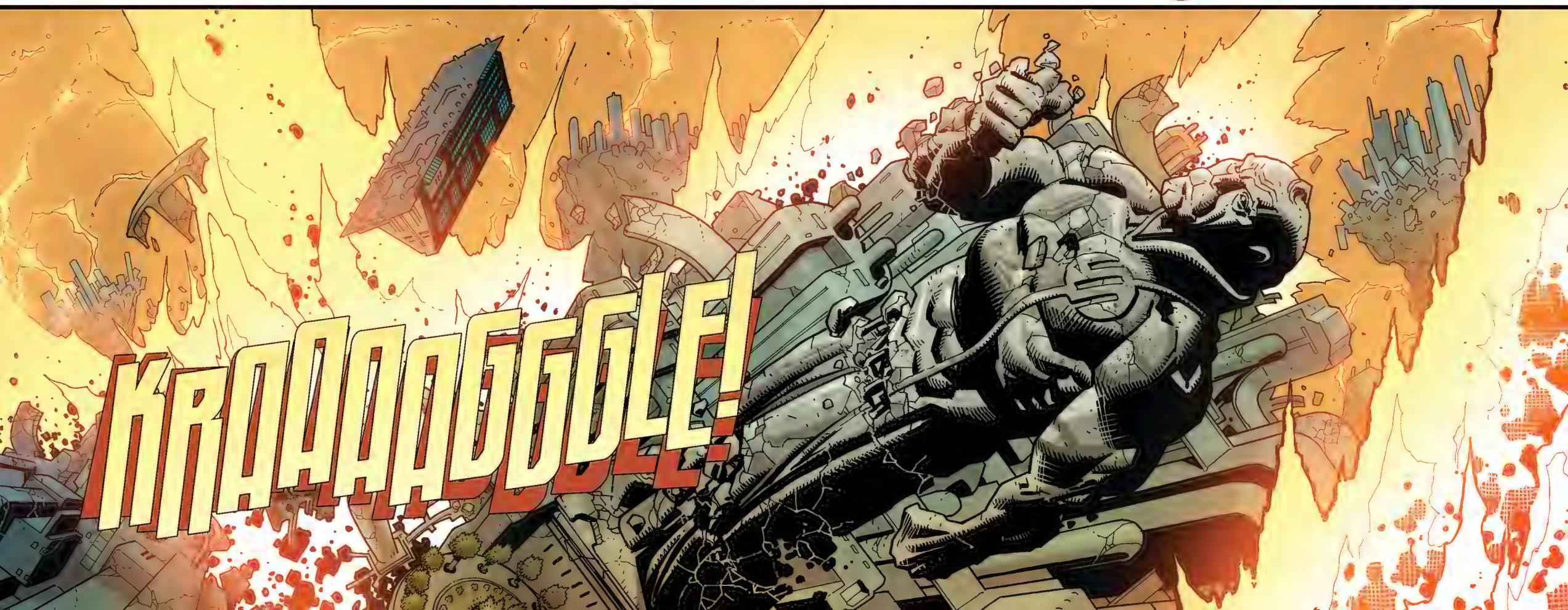




FASTER! FASTER!













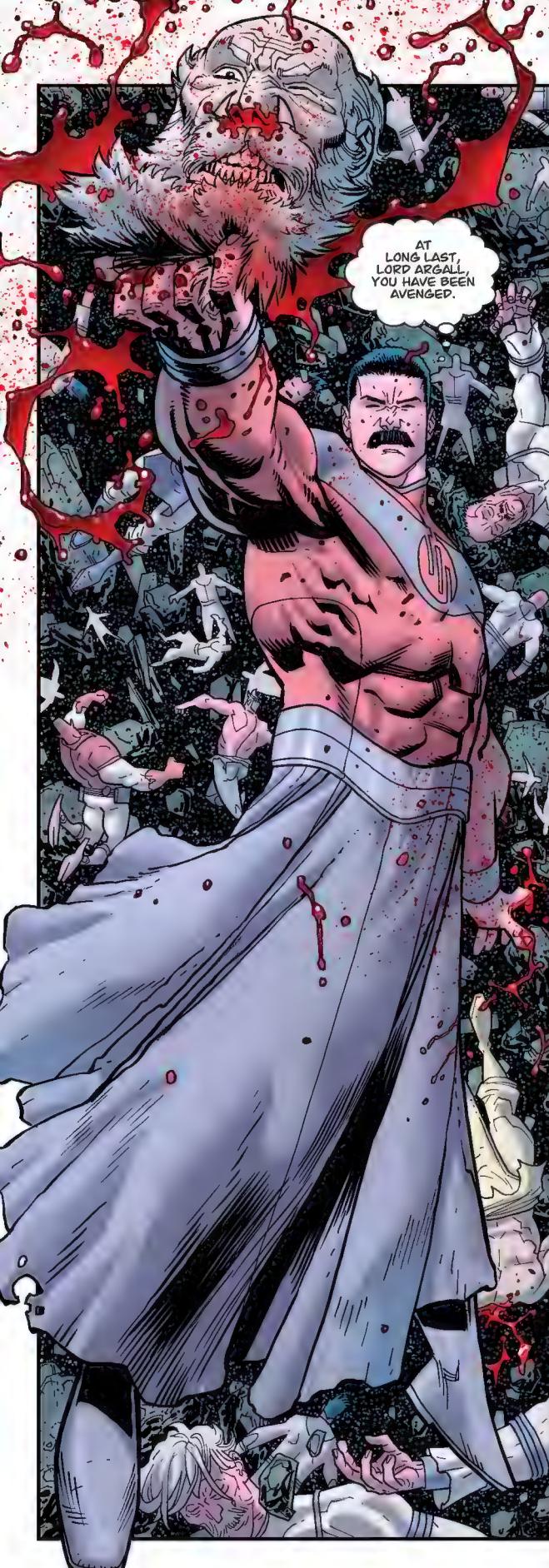


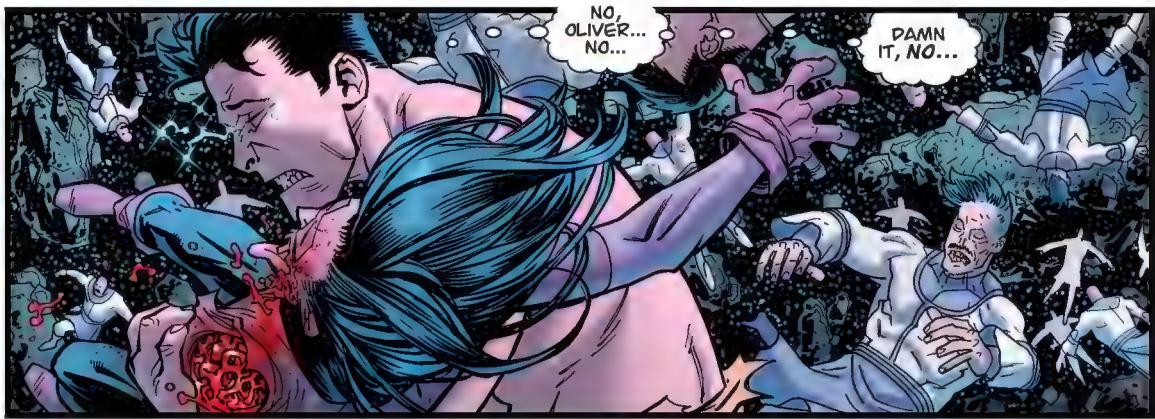






BUT
REVENGE!



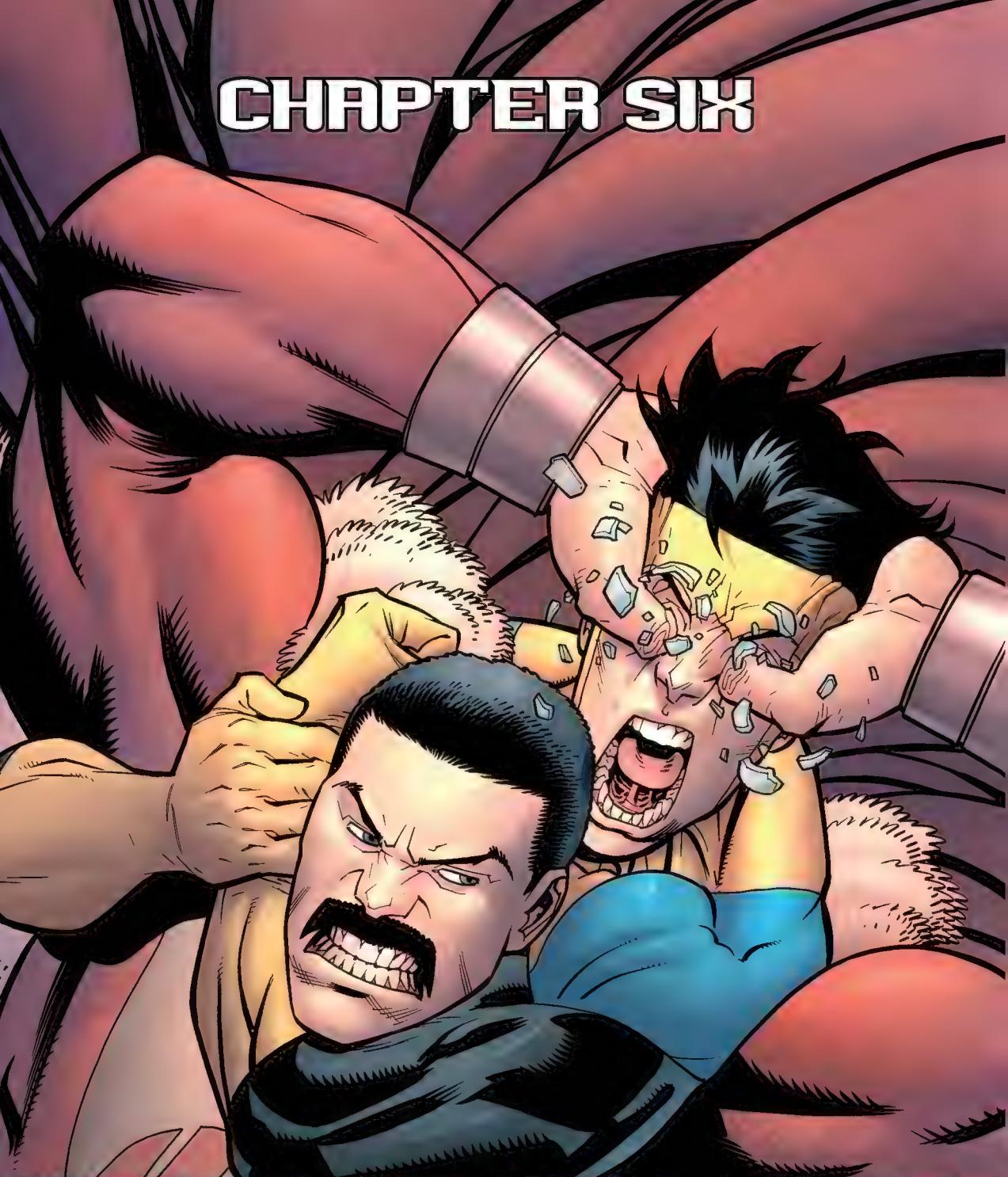




YOU
ARE ALL
NEXT.

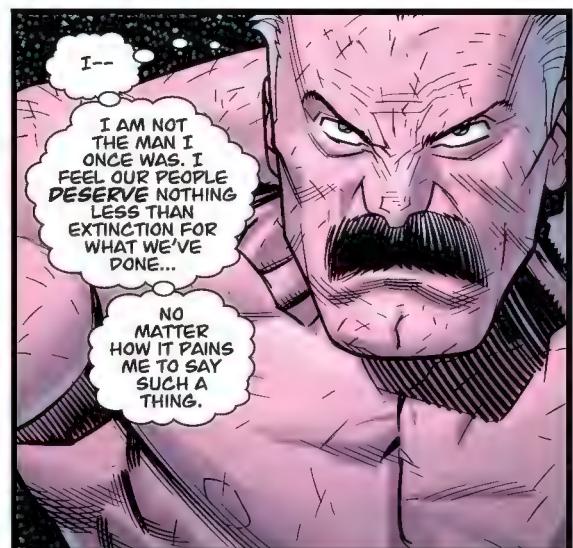
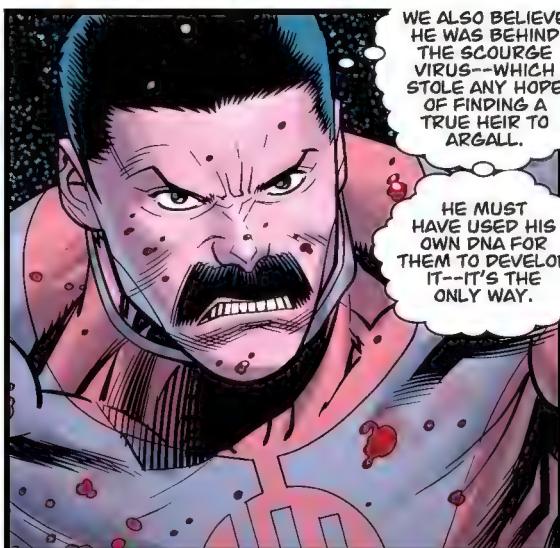


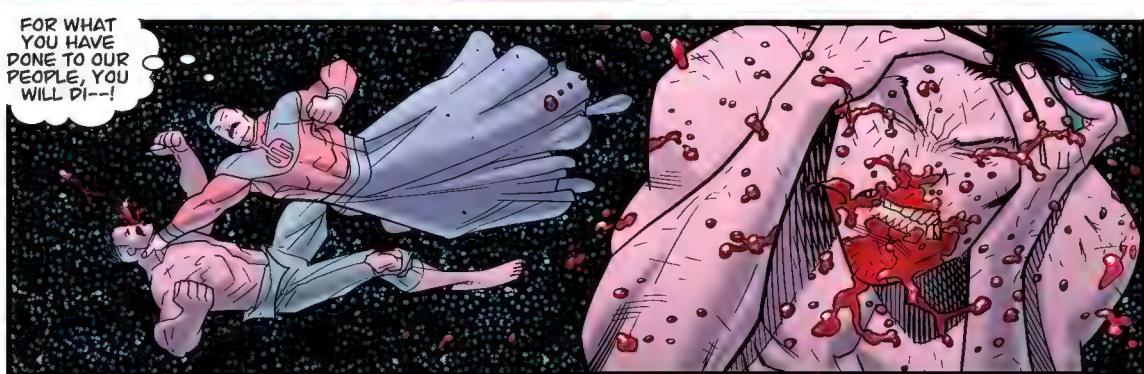
CHAPTER SIX

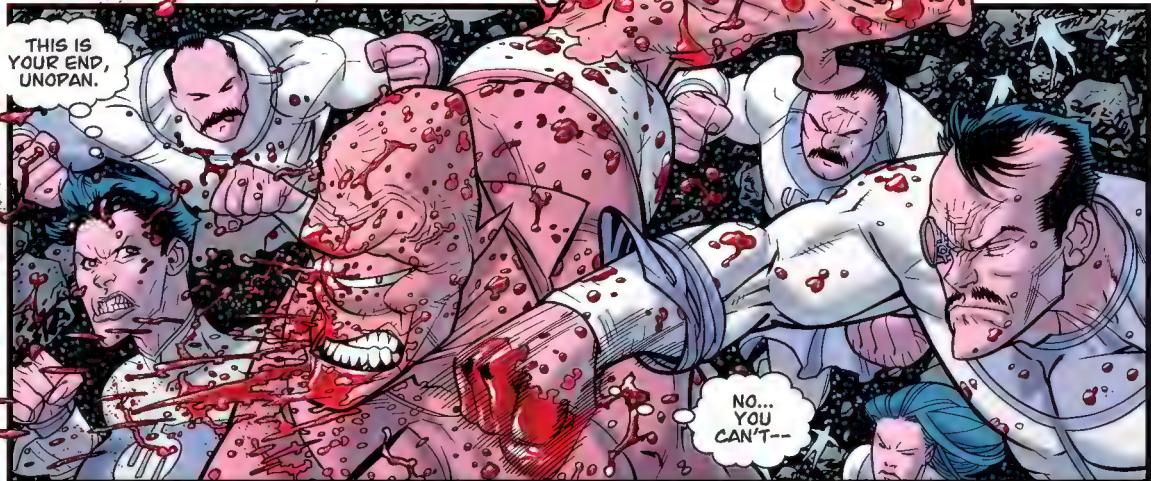




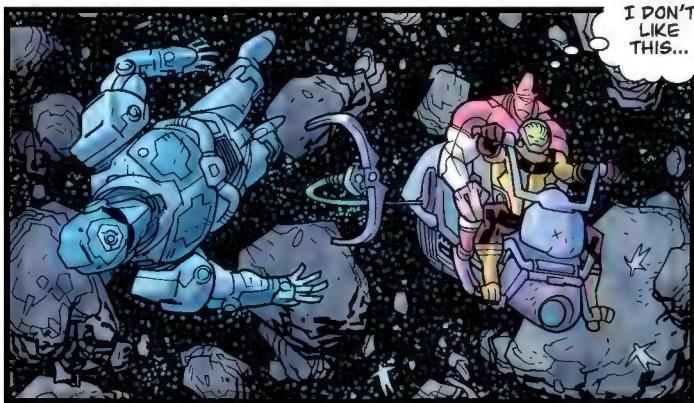














HOW DO
WE BEAT
THIS GUY?

WE
CAN'T.



WAIT--
WHAT?!

IN ORDER TO
BE MADE REGENT,
THRAGG WAS
TRAINED FROM BIRTH,
TEMPERED TO BE
THE STRONGEST
AMONG US ALL...
EDUCATED IN ALL
MANNERS OF COMBAT...

WE
SIMPLY
CANNOT
DEFEAT HIM
ON OUR
OWN.



YOUR
FATHER
SPEAKS THE
TRUTH.



MARK, PLEASE
KNOW... NO
MATTER WHAT
I SAID...

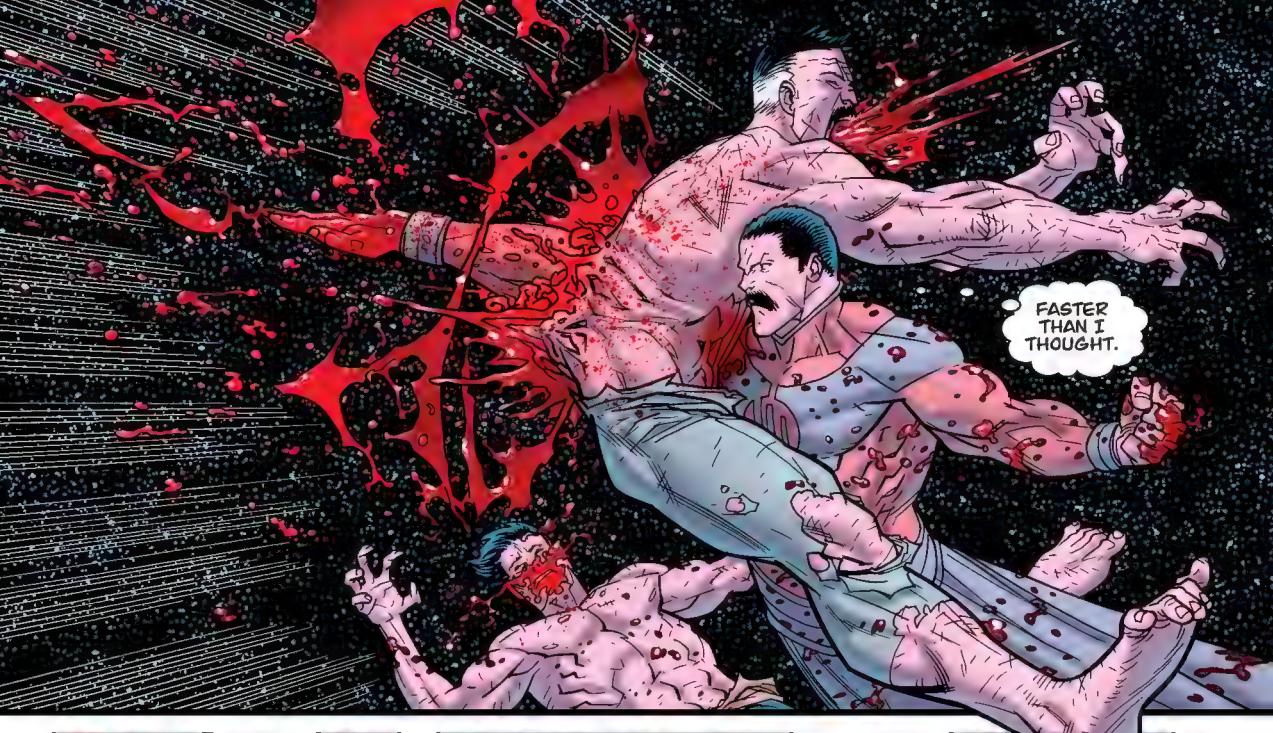
...I
ALWAYS
LOVED
YOU.

I THOUGHT
THAT MADE ME
WEAKER... BUT
I KNOW NOW THAT
IT MADE ME
STRONGER.

DAD?

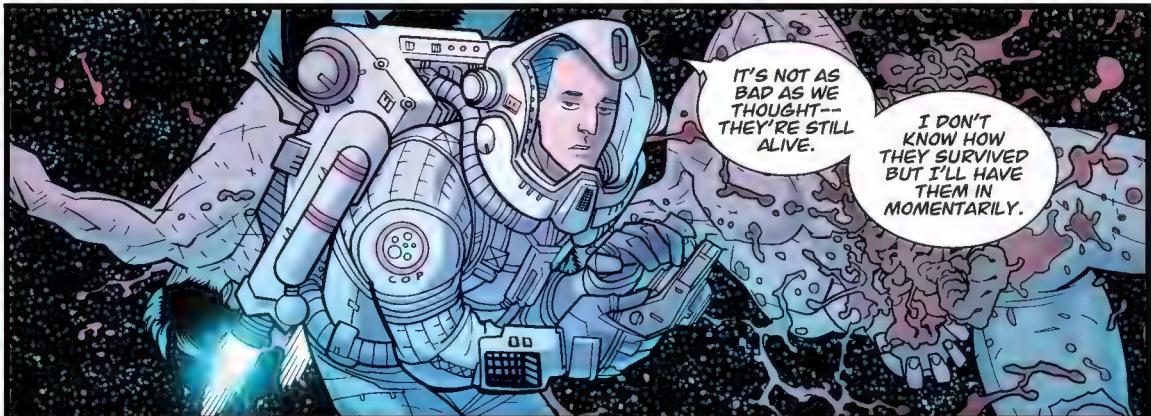


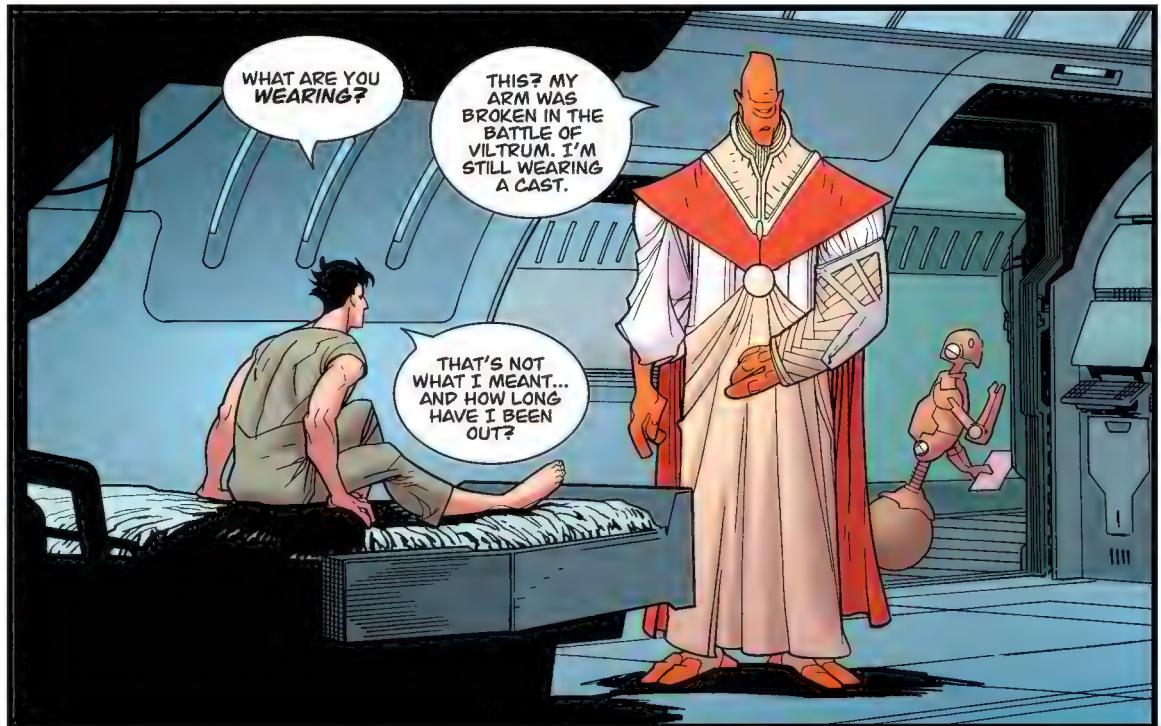


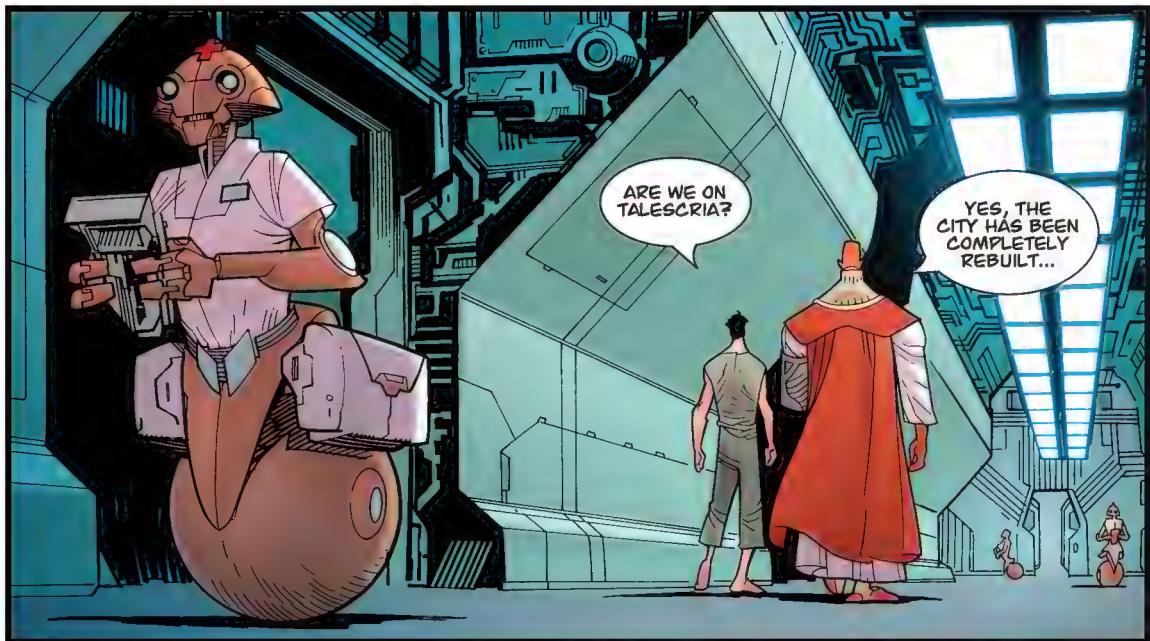


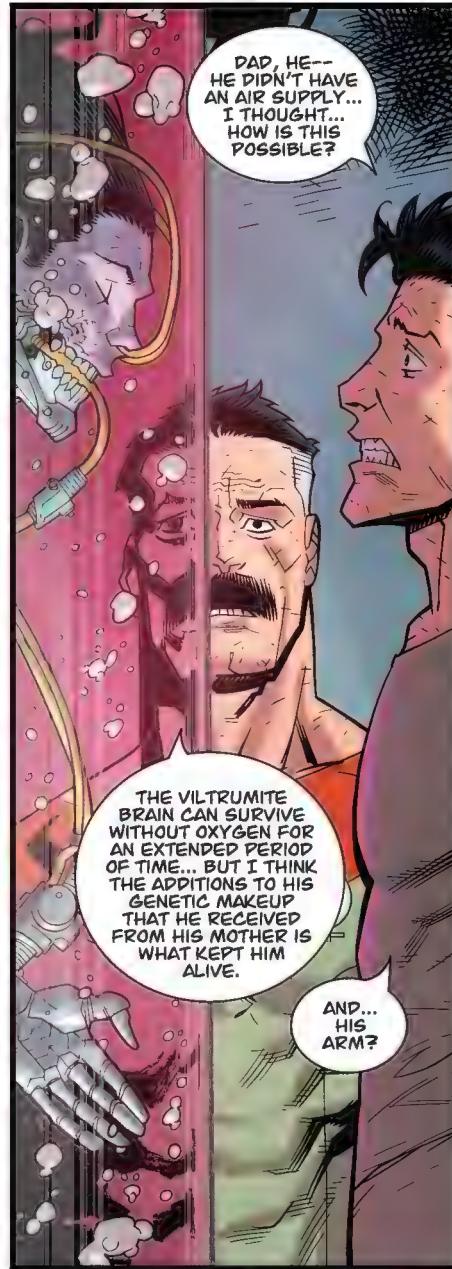














GRANTED, SPACE IS A BIG PLACE, AND THEY CAN CERTAINLY TRAVEL GREAT DISTANCES IN LITTLE TIME... BUT WE'VE GOT EYES IN ALL QUADRANTS OF THE GALAXY.

IT WOULD BE VERY HARD TO HIDE FROM US.

WE'VE SEARCHED ALL THE FORMER PLANETS OF THE VILTRUM EMPIRE TO SEE IF SOMEONE MIGHT POSSIBLY BE HARBORING THEM. THEY'RE NOT.

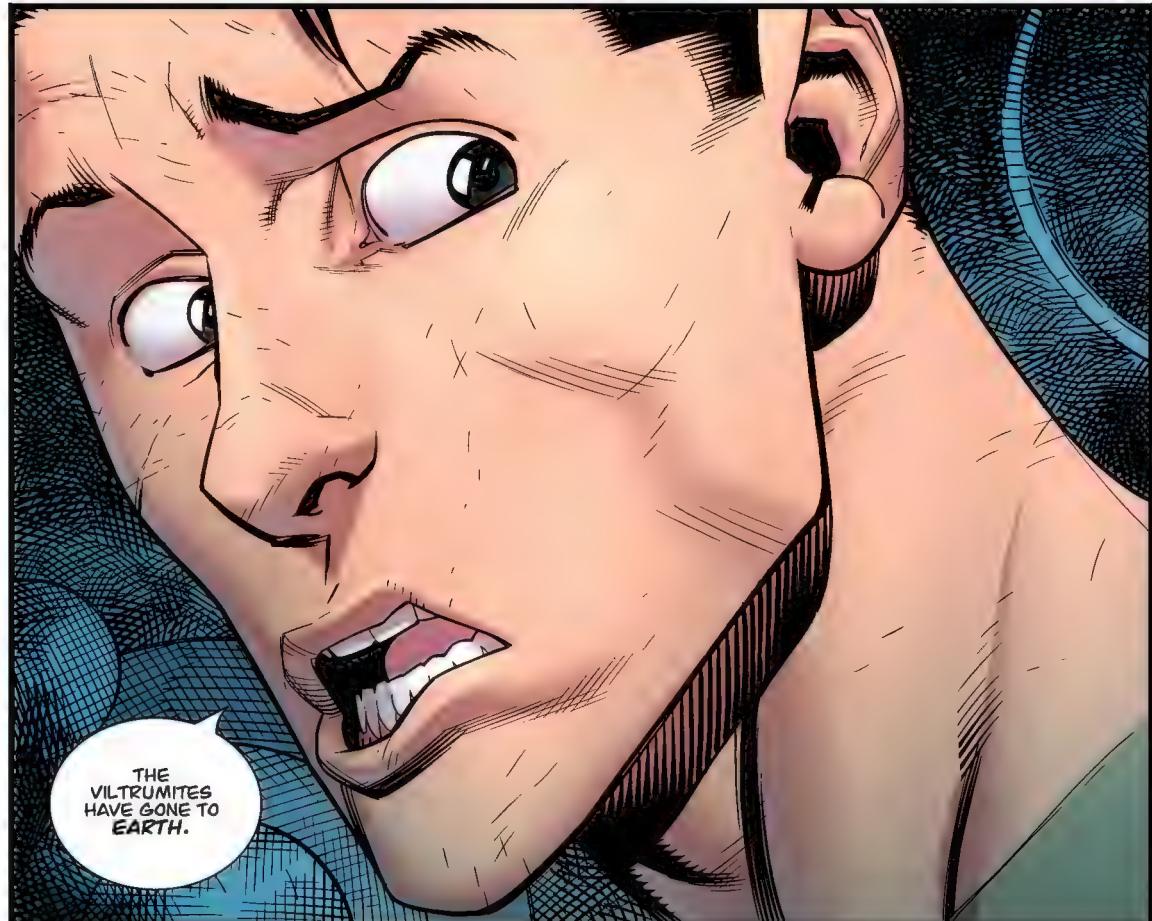
WITHOUT THOSE PLANETS TO BACK THEM, THEIR NUMBERS DWINDLE TO THE POINT THAT ANY FRONTAL ASSAULT AGAINST US WOULD BE INEFFECTIVE AT BEST, DISASTROUS AT WORST.

SO IT MAKES SENSE THAT THEY WOULD LAY LOW FOR A WHILE, REGROUP, PREPARE FOR A SERIES OF SMALL, CALCULATED ASSAULTS.

CONVENTIONAL WISDOM WOULD HAVE THEM ATTACKING THEIR FORMERLY OCCUPIED PLANETS, IT WOULD TAKE LITTLE EFFORT TO TURN THEM BACK TO THEIR SIDE... AND EVENTUALLY THEY WOULD AGAIN COMMAND A FORCE LARGE ENOUGH TO DESTROY US.

WE'VE BEEN STATIONING OUR TROOPS WITH THESE PLANETS IN PREPARATION FOR THIS. A DELAY OF THIS LONG, ESPECIALLY WITH THEM KNOWING YOU AND YOUR FATHER AND BROTHER WERE OUT OF COMMISSION FOLLOWING OUR LAST BATTLE... MAKES NO SENSE...

...NO SENSE AT ALL.



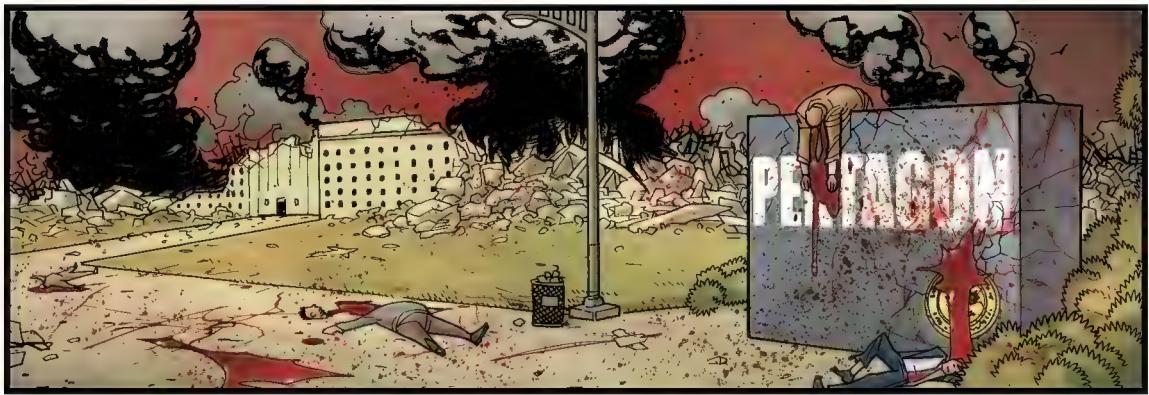


CHAPTER SEVEN



RYAN
TOWNSEND
fco



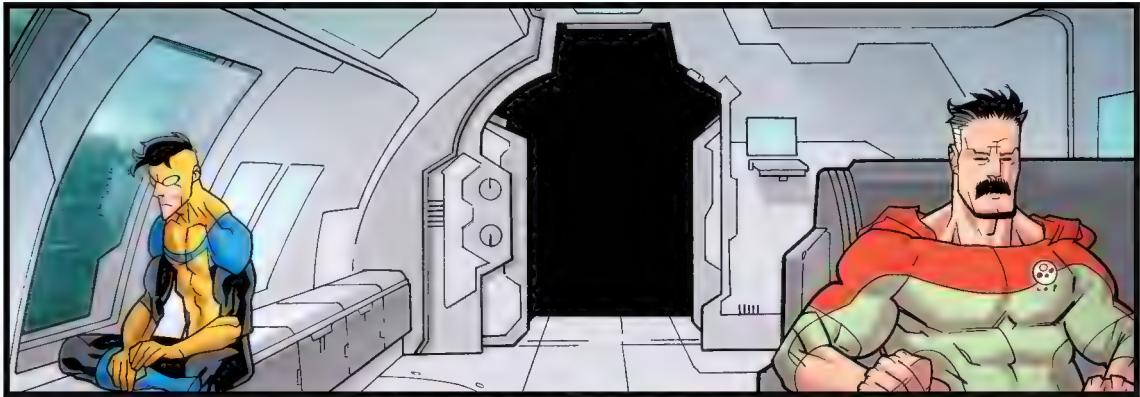


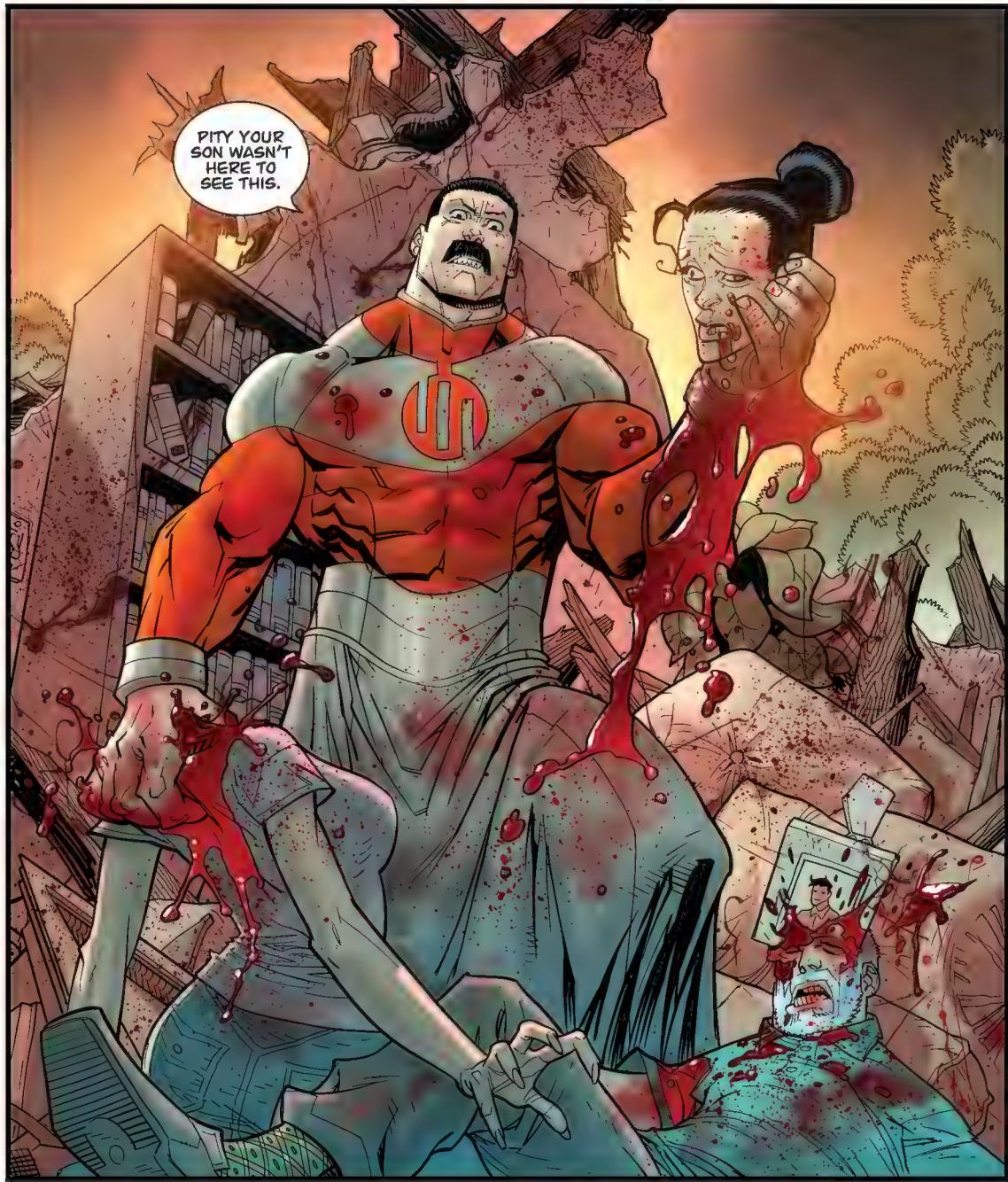


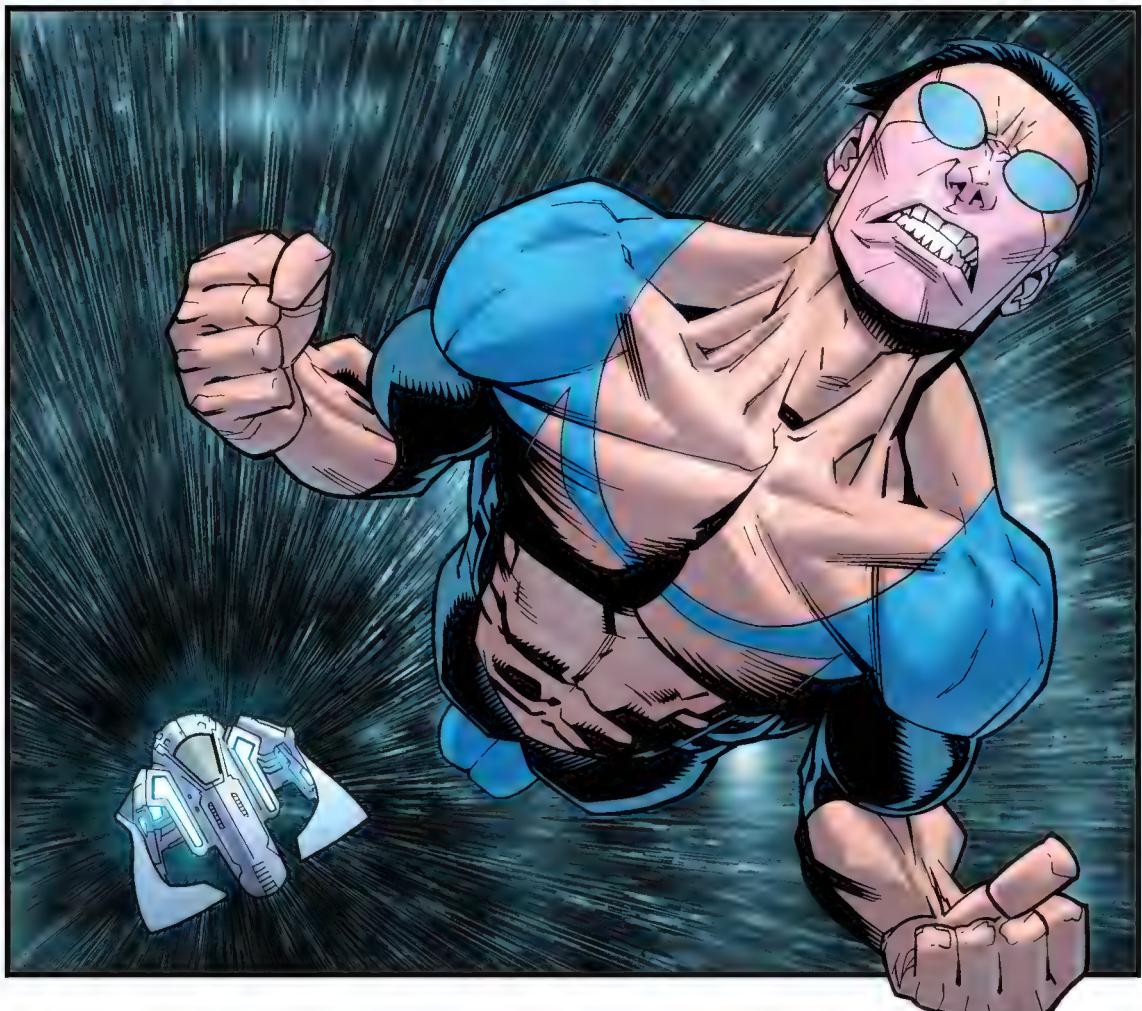
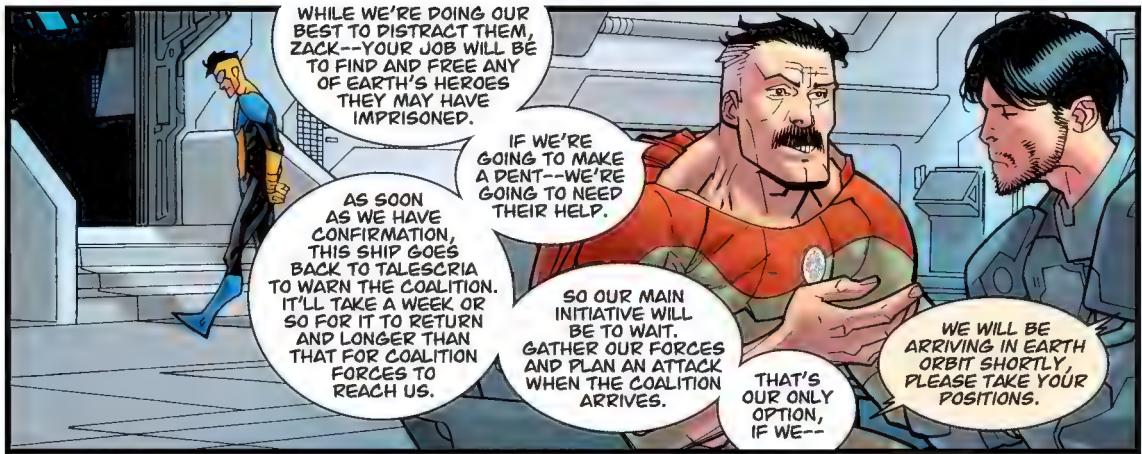


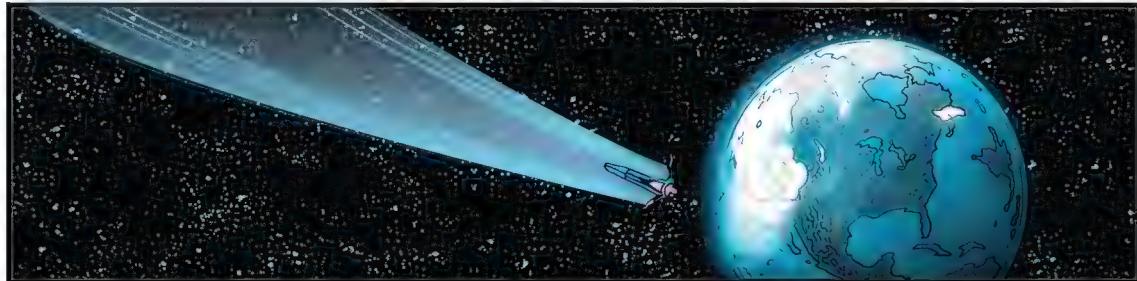


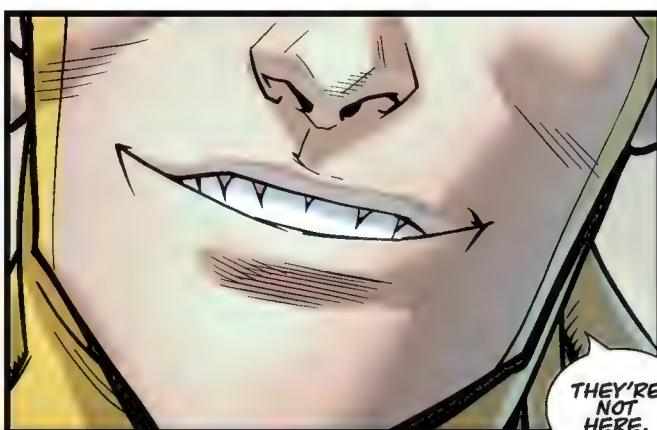














WE VERY
MUCH ARE
HERE.



YOU CAN FIGHT
ME IF YOU WISH,
BUT I AM
NOT ALONE
HERE.

IF BY
CHANCE YOU
WERE ABLE
TO INJURE ME,
I COULDN'T
GUARANTEE
THE REST OF
MY FORCES
WOULDN'T
LAY WASTE
TO THIS
PLANET.

I
SUGGEST
THAT WE
TALK, THE
THREE OF
US.

YOUR
CHOICE.
FIGHT OR
TALK.

TALK.

WISE
CHOICE...
I AM
PLEASSED.

I HAVE
COME TO OFFER
YOU A TRUCE.
THERE ARE EXACTLY
THIRTY-SEVEN OF
US LEFT ALIVE,
SOME OF US
SEVERELY
INJURED.

THAT IS
ENOUGH TO
TEAR THIS PLANET
IN HALF, KILLING
EVERY LIVING
CREATURE HERE,
AND THERE IS
NOTHING YOU
COULD DO TO
STOP THAT.

AND IT
WOULD BE FAIR
RETALIATION
FOR WHAT YOU
DID TO
OUR HOME
WORLD.







THIS IS THE ONLY WAY TO ENSURE THE SURVIVAL OF THE VILTRUMITE PEOPLE.

WE WILL RESTORE OUR RANKS OVER THE COURSE OF THOUSANDS OF YEARS. HUMAN DNA HAS BEEN PROVEN TO MAKE NEAR PERFECT HYBRIDS... THE CLOSEST THING WE HAVE TO PURE-BLOODED VILTRUMITES.



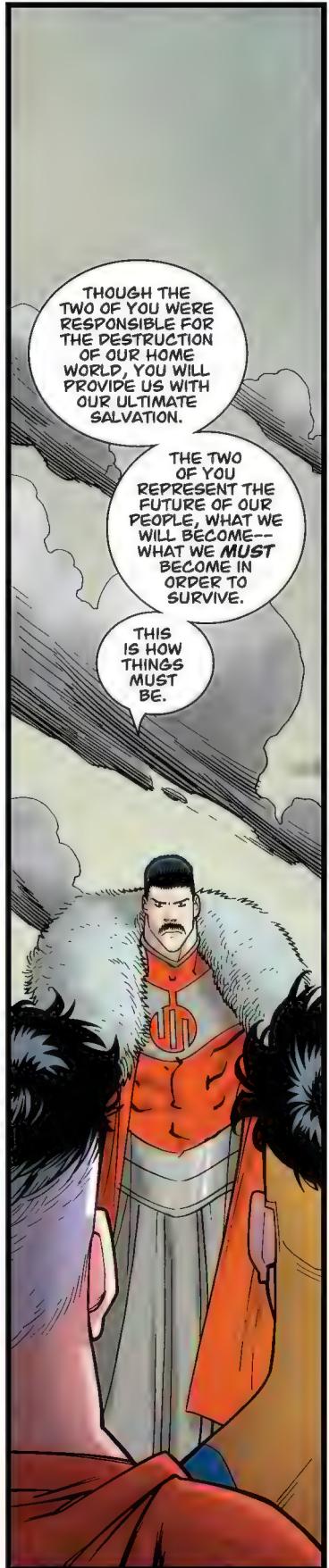
"OUR CHILDREN AND OUR CHILDREN'S CHILDREN WILL JOIN OUR RANKS, THEIR CHILDREN AND OUR RANKS WILL SWELL WITH THE INFUSION OF HUMAN DNA."

"YOU WILL ALLOW US THE TIME TO RESTORE OUR NUMBERS... TO REBUILD OUR EMPIRE."

THOUGH THE TWO OF YOU WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DESTRUCTION OF OUR HOME WORLD, YOU WILL PROVIDE US WITH OUR ULTIMATE SALVATION.

THE TWO OF YOU REPRESENT THE FUTURE OF OUR PEOPLE, WHAT WE WILL BECOME--WHAT WE MUST BECOME IN ORDER TO SURVIVE.

THIS IS HOW THINGS MUST BE.



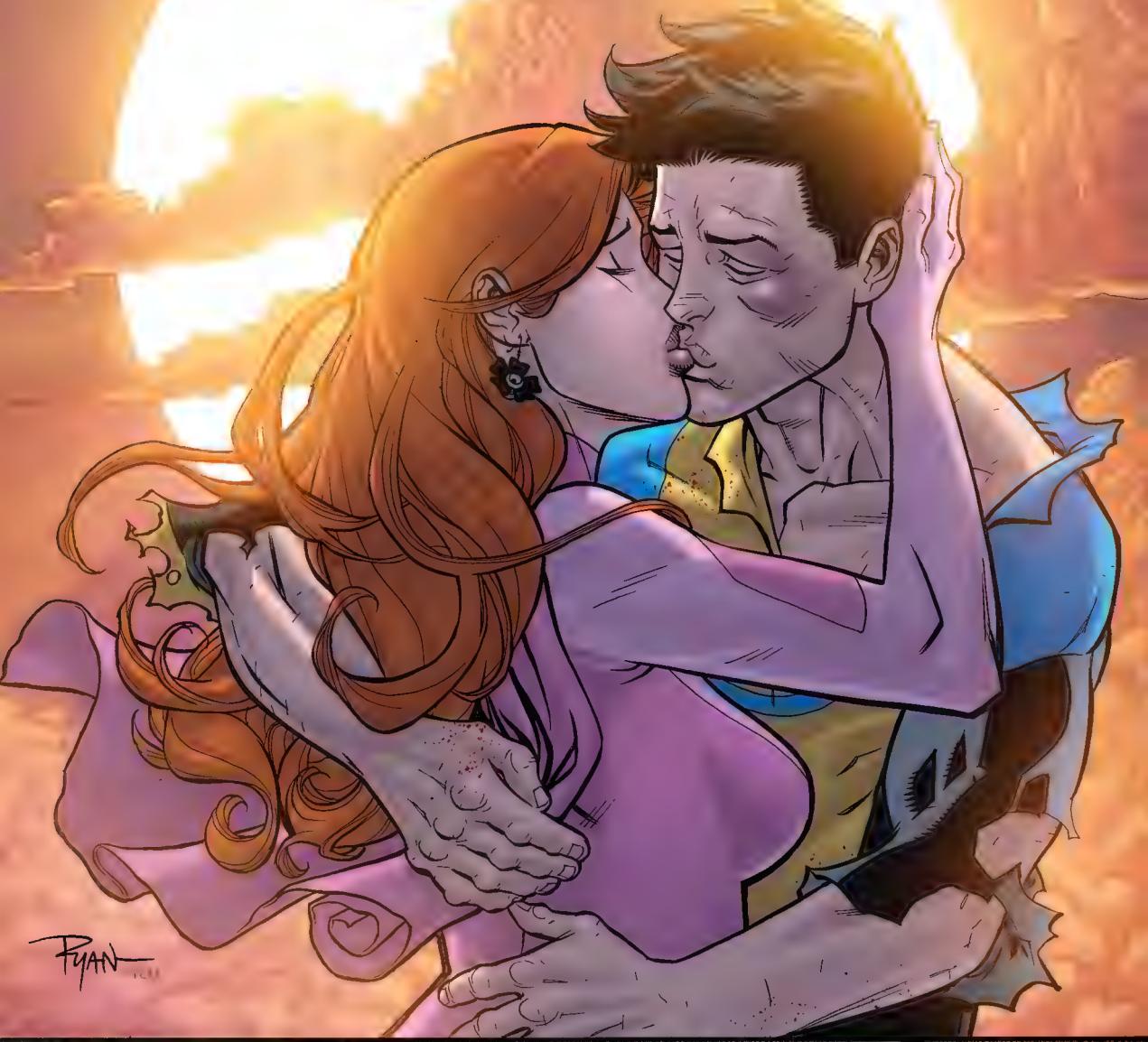








CHAPTER EIGHT



YOU HAVE
CHOSEN
WISELY.

YOU HAVE
MY WORD. WHILE
WE LIVE AMONG
YOU, NO HARM
WILL COME TO YOUR
PEOPLE BY THE
HAND OF ANY
VILTRUMITE.

THE TRUTH
IS, BY ALLOWING
US TO LIVE HERE,
THE TWO OF YOU
MAY VERY WELL
HAVE BECOME
THE SAVIORS
OF OUR
PEOPLE.

IRONIC.



MY
GOD...
WHAT
HAVE I
DONE?



YOU HAVE
SAVED THE
LIVES OF
EVERY LIVING
THING ON THIS
PLANET.

YOU WILL
NOT HEAR
FROM ME
AGAIN.

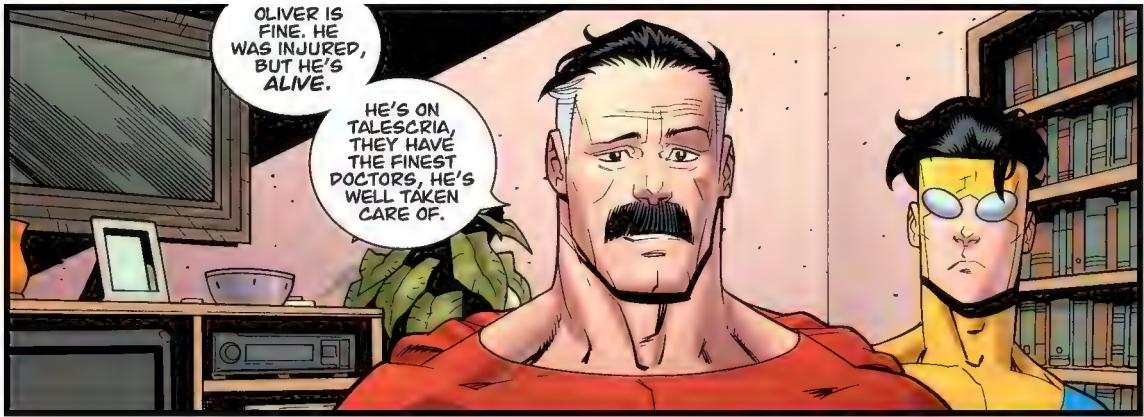
I LEAVE
YOU.



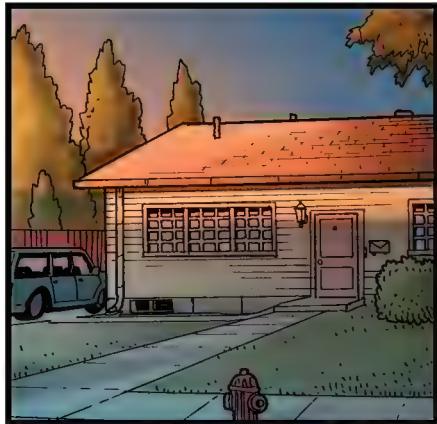




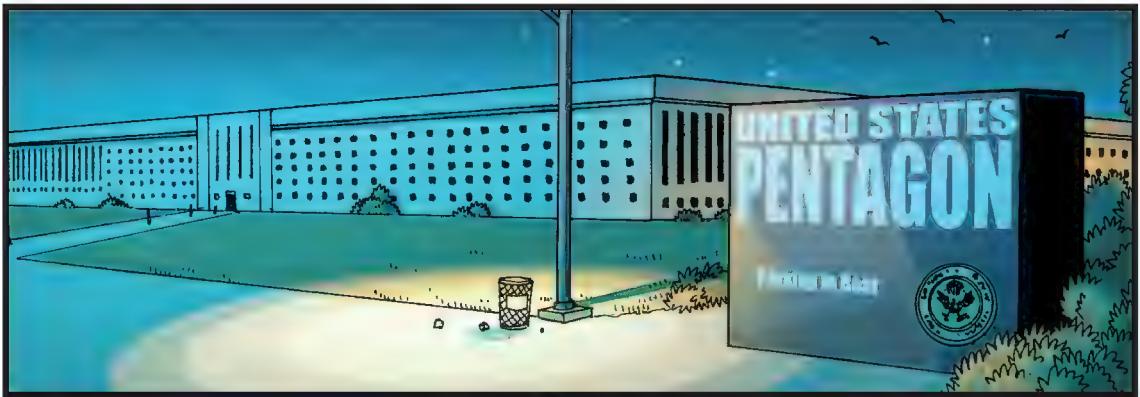










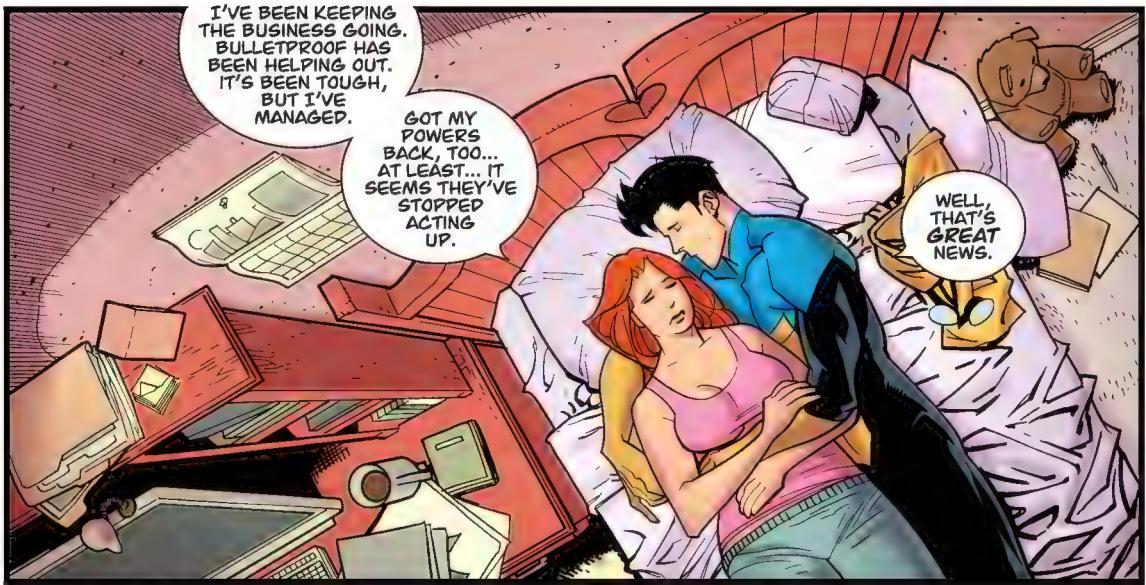




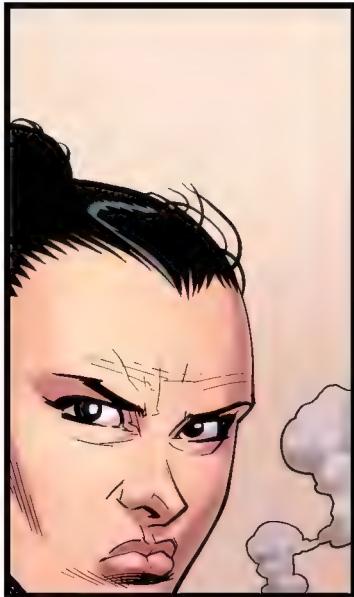
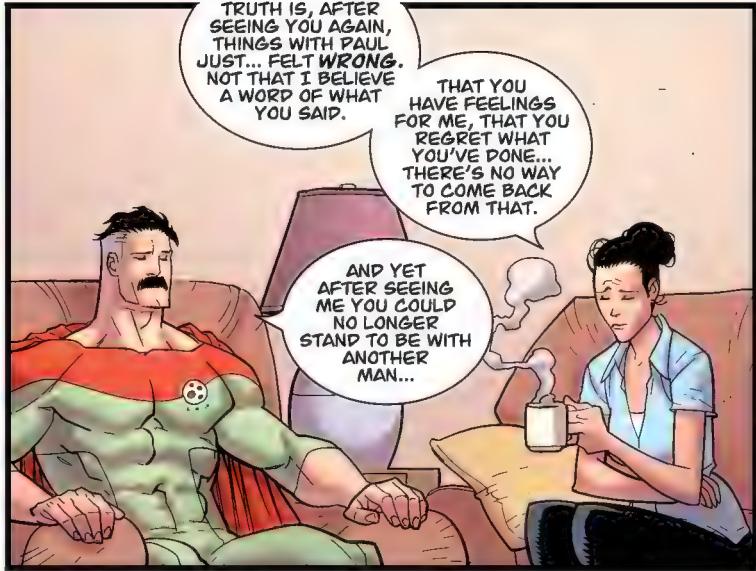
BUMMER.





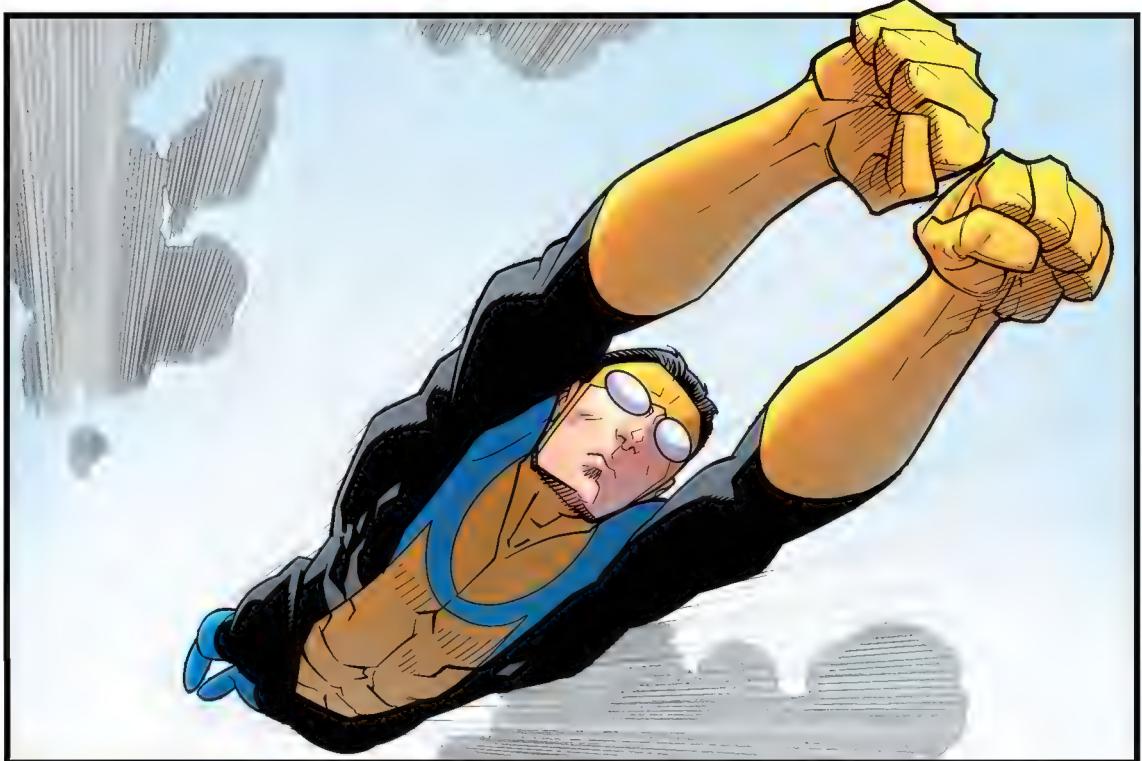


















THE SCOURGE VIRUS.

THE VIRUS THAT
RAVAGED THE
VILTRUMITE
POPULATION...
NEARLY KILLED
THEM ALL.

THIS IS A STRONGER
STRAIN, PERFECTED...
IT WILL NOT FAIL
THIS TIME.

IF THE WAR EFFORT APPEARS
LOST, I URGE YOU TO USE IT...
IGNORE YOUR ATTACHMENT
TO OUR VILTRUMITE ALLIES.



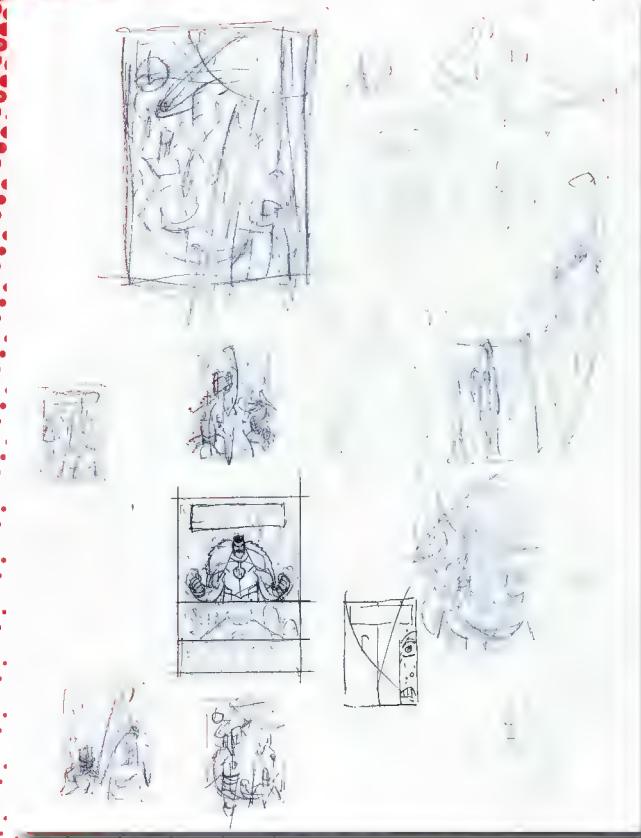
FOR THE GOOD OF
THE UNIVERSE.

ERADICATE ALL
VILTRUM LIFE...
FOREVER.

WHATEVER YOU DO,
MAKE CERTAIN THAT
I DID NOT DIE IN VAIN.
-THAEDUS.

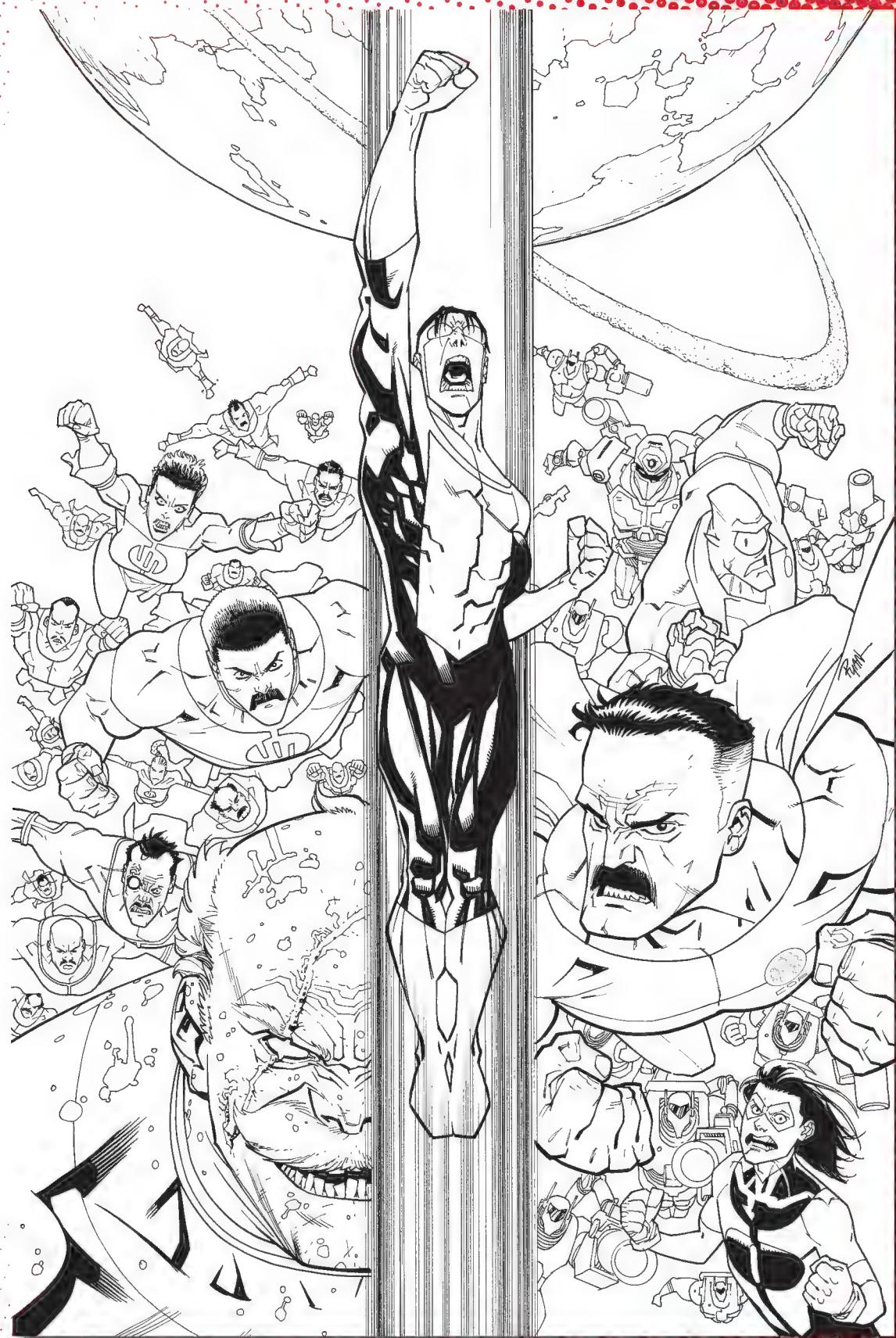


SKETCHBOOK



ROBERT KIRKMAN: The volume 14 TPB cover--yowza, Ryan Ottley does it again. I must say, I really love the TPB covers for this series--they're always cool. Ryan always does a great job of keeping the style consistent while also keeping it fresh and original from volume to volume and the art is always just top notch. I think Ryan really shines on these covers; he's so great, and... what--did you expect this commentary to be something other than me complimenting Ryan? Sorry.

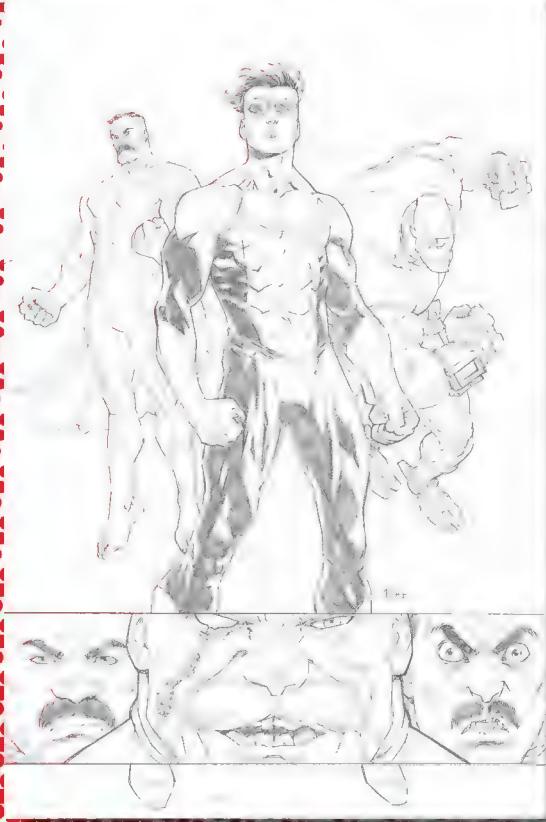
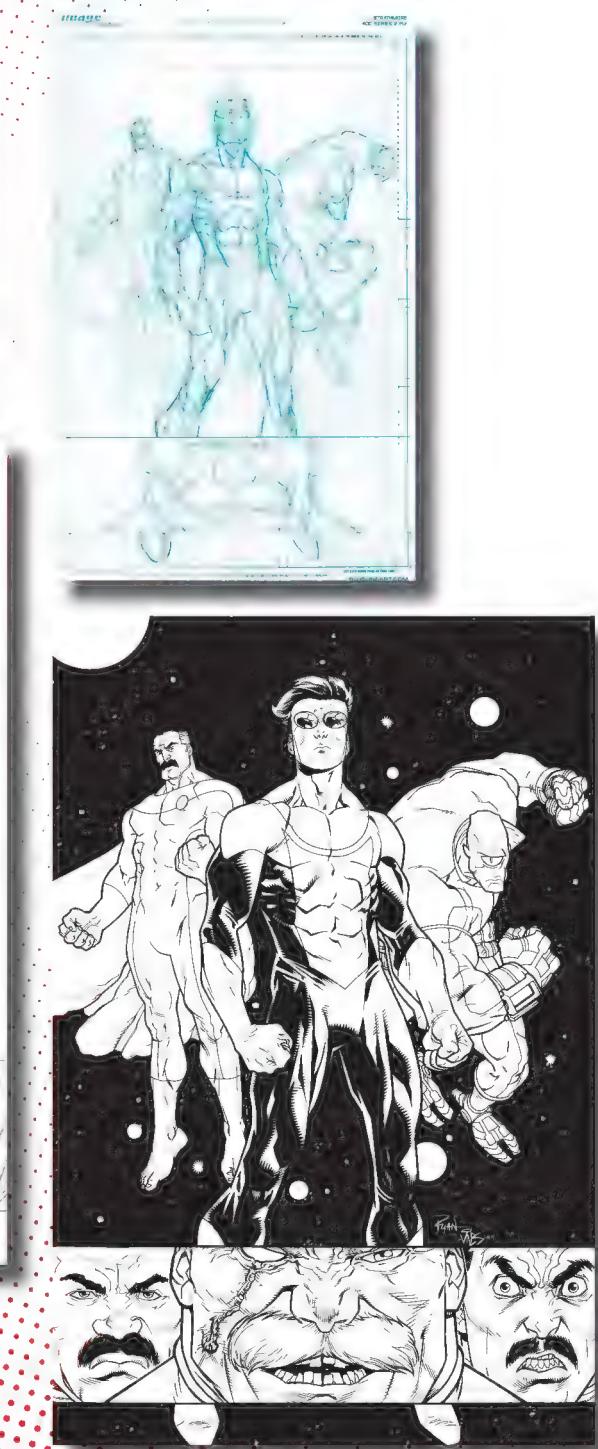
RYAN OTTLEY: Never apologize for complimenting me. It's offensive. Now apologize for apologizing. But thank you, this cover has been said to be Invincible flying up a waterfall which would be awesome if he was. Space waterfall! In my defense, it does look more like water in the colors, something I didn't notice. But oh well, the colors are awesome, FCO rocks! And I normally don't print my prelim "thinking" pages because they are normally even less coherent than what you see here. This has enough where you can see some of my thought process behind the layout of the cover. Those come first, then the thumbnail sketch, then layouts, pencils, and inks! Comics!

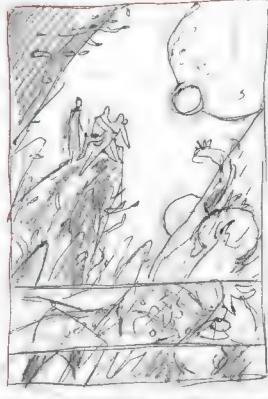




KIRKMAN: The covers for issue 71 and 72. For the *Viltrumite War* storyline (which allowed us to use the title of my favorite sitcom ever for the name of this TPB) I really wanted to do some kind of unified cover design that would make the whole story arc link together visually. So I stole a page from our TPB cover designs and suggested to Ryan that we slap a wide panel across the bottom of all the covers and show two scenes per cover instead of one. And of course Ryan took the idea and spun it into gold.

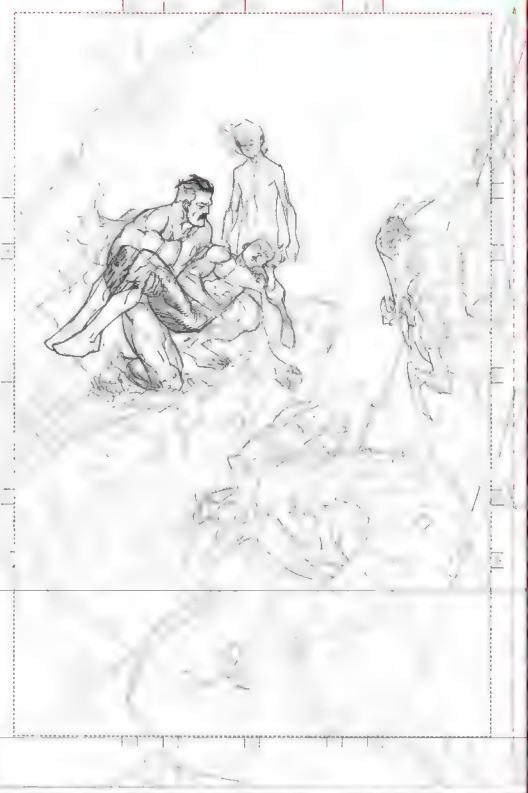
OTTLEY: The *Viltrumite War* arc! Funniest sitcom ever. The wide panel made laying out a cover even more of a challenge since I had to pay attention to where I place the main image along with the panel. Fun stuff. And for issue 72 cover, I got one of my favorite inkers to ink it, Dexter Vines. Thanks, Dexter!

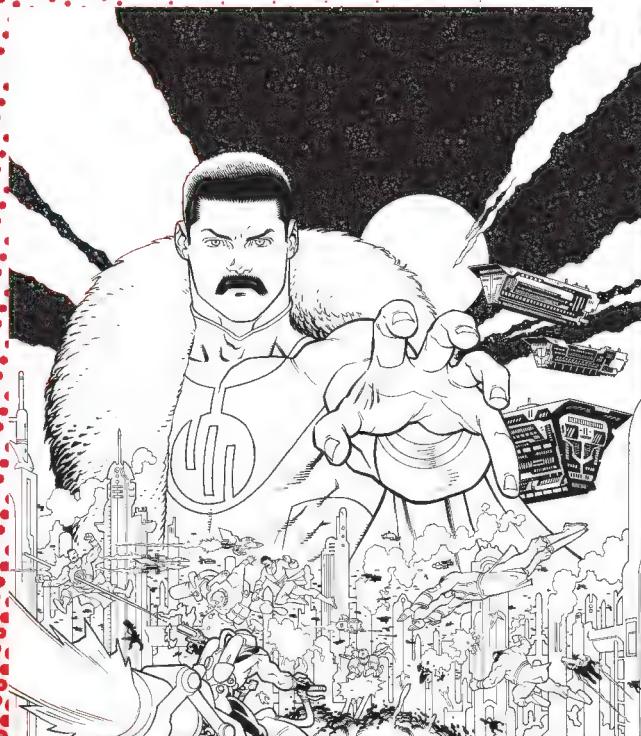




KIRKMAN: The cover to issue 73, you can't go wrong with having your main character near death on a cover. Boy, do we love going to that well. It always looks so cool!

OTTLEY: You look cool.



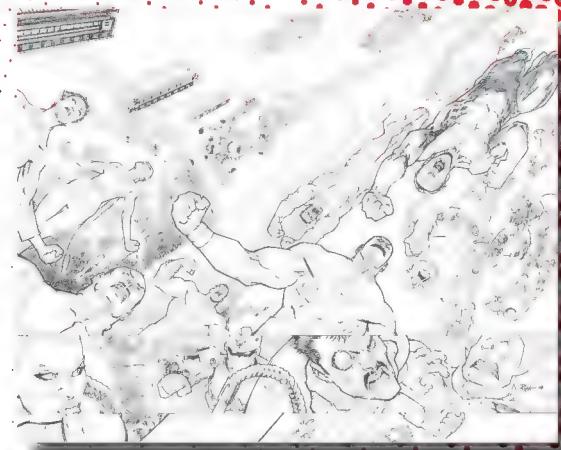


KIRKMAN: I really wanted to have one of those Doctor Doom-style, big villain with an outstretched hand lording over our heroes type cover. The kind that Erik Larsen does so well. Great shot of Anissa in the wide panel, too. Gotta say, this cover is sweet, but it's really kind of impossible to color well and make it not look like a rainbow. I really have to give FCO credit for being able to make this cover look so good in color. That guy's got talent.

OTTLEY: Yeah, FCO really did a great job, it was a tough one to handle and he nailed it. I think this is where the Freddy Mercury comments REALLY started rolling in. I still get asked at conventions if he was based on him. I need to put up a sign or something with a giant NO on it that I can point at when people ask. But hey, Cory designed Thragg, so we should really ask him. Where is Cory? CORY! Hey there, was Thragg based on the singer for Queen?

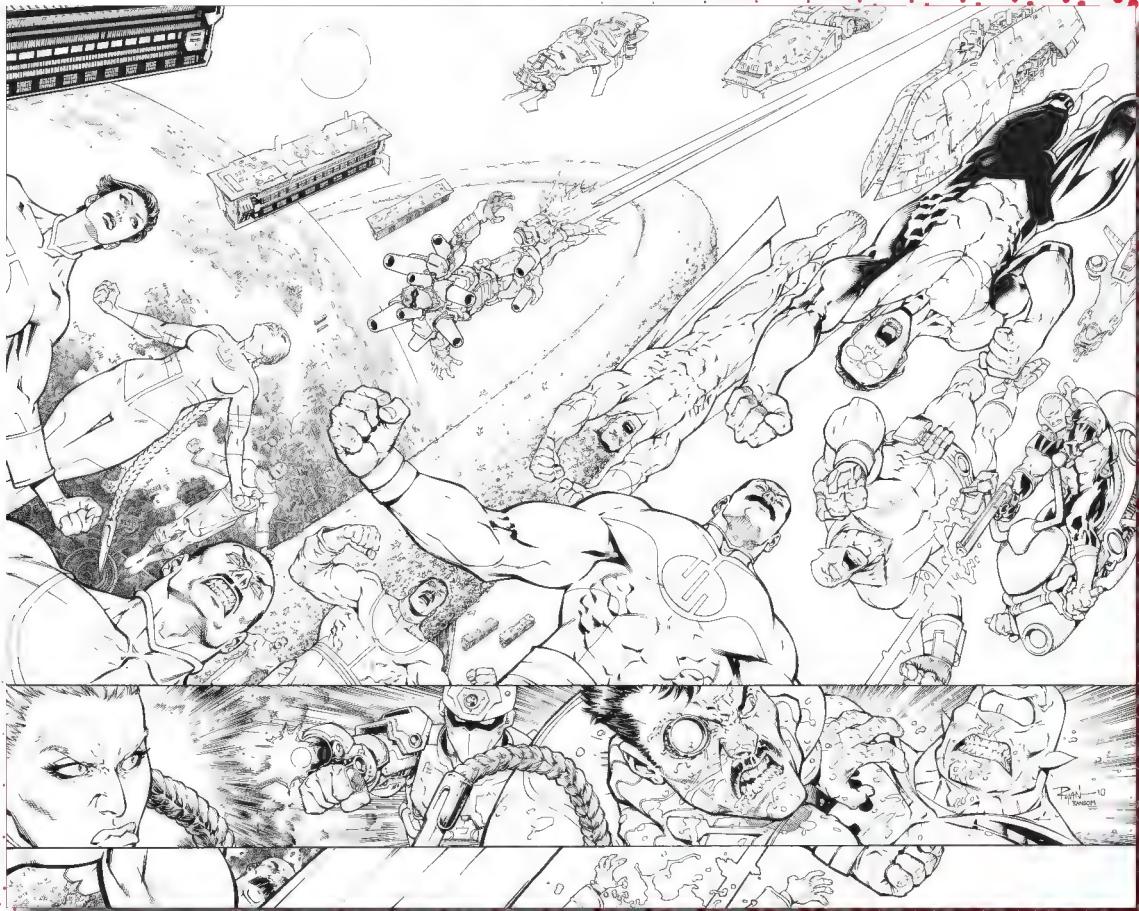
CORY WALKER: No! Are you kidding?!

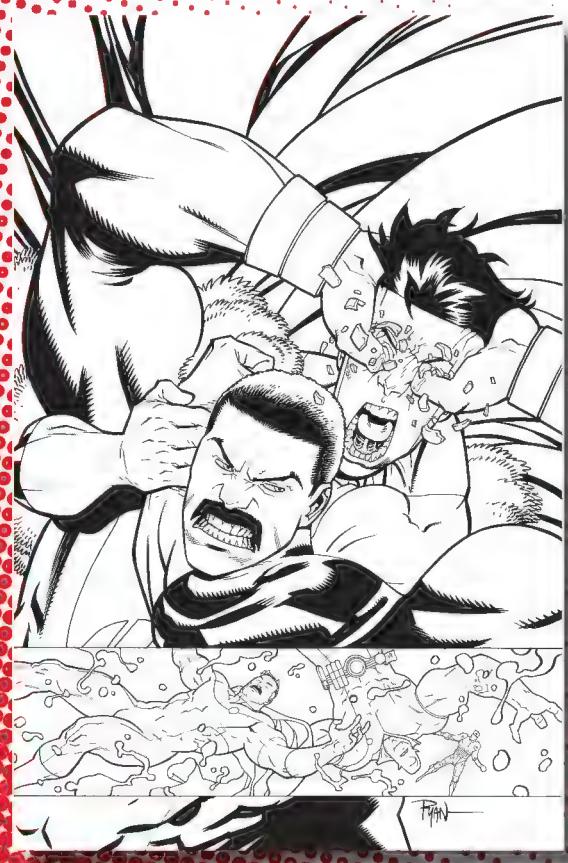
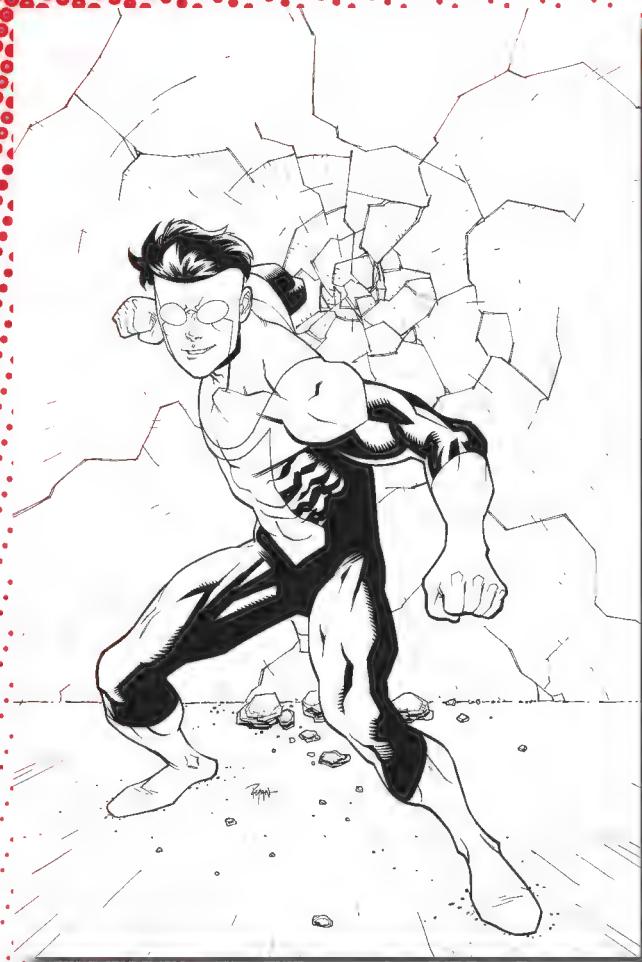
OTTLEY: I love you, Cory.



KIRKMAN: So for the cover of issue 75, we decided to do something special. Wraparound covers are fun, right? And we wanted to do the whole bad guys on one side, good guys on the other thing--but when you do that as a wraparound sometimes it makes the covers pretty bland when you look at them in halves. The front half could have just been Invincible and the rest looking really angrily over at the book next to it on the stack. That's not very friendly. Eventually Ryan came up with a layout that worked! Whew!

OTTLEY: Yeah, at first I was going for the quicker version which was just bad guys on one side, good on the other. It was a bit bland and it's been done to death by other companies. But we wanted this cover to shine so I chose a much harder layout but it was a lot of fun squeezing in the planet and ring of bodies, space ships, and all that fun stuff. Took more time, but was worth it. I normally ink my own covers but I really needed to get going on the issue and I was having fun getting others to ink a couple covers so I thought I'd ask Mike Ransom Getty, artist of *Guarding the Globe* to ink this for me. The guy is master with that brush! Thanks, Ransom!





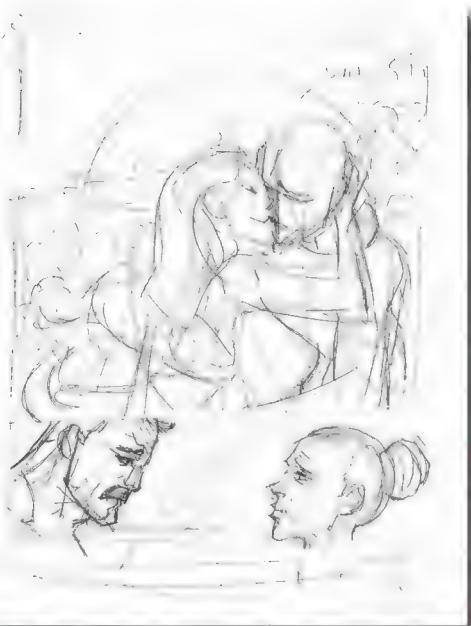
KIRKMAN: Another thing I wanted to do in commemoration of the anniversary 75th issue was have a cool redraw of the first issue's cover. I thought it would be a cool thing to show the differences in the book from then to now by having the image redrawn. We actually gave this variant cover away free to retailers as a thank you for all the support they've given this title over the years. And then there's the cover to 76--ouch--poor Invincible!

OTTLEY: I really need to pick up writing. I'd love to say "Hey for this month's issue 75 spectacular you need to draw a double-page cover with everyone on it, an issue the size of TWO issues with more figures per page than you've ever drawn before. OH, and a variant cover, and do it all in a month, GO!" And then I would just sit back and laugh.



KIRKMAN: The covers for issues 77 and 78--what a cool couple of covers. I love the issue 77 cover. I really wanted to have a cover that would mislead audiences into thinking there was going to be a knock-down-drag-out fight on Earth between Invincible and the Viltrumites! I love setting fans up for a let down. On the cover to 78, hot damn can Ryan draw clouds or what? And the coloring on this cover is just amazing.

OTTLEY: That 77 cover was inked by none other than the awesome Tim Townsend. It was so great to work with another one of my favorite inkers of all time. I'm really happy with how the cover turned out. The panel for the cover to 78 was difficult to compose because I needed to fit them in with a kissing close-up, but that panel was hard to work around so it looks kind of funny--like I'm censoring Eve's butt or something. I apologize to all of you fans of Eve's bum.





KIRKMAN: If there's one shortcoming I can admit to in this Viltrumite War storyline... it's that I wanted to focus on the Viltrumites much more... I wanted to show things from their side from time to time, really get into the nuts and bolts of their society and really develop the personalities of Viltrumites like Anissa and Kregg and Thrall and others... but I just ran out of room. Ryan did some cool Viltrumite designs though...

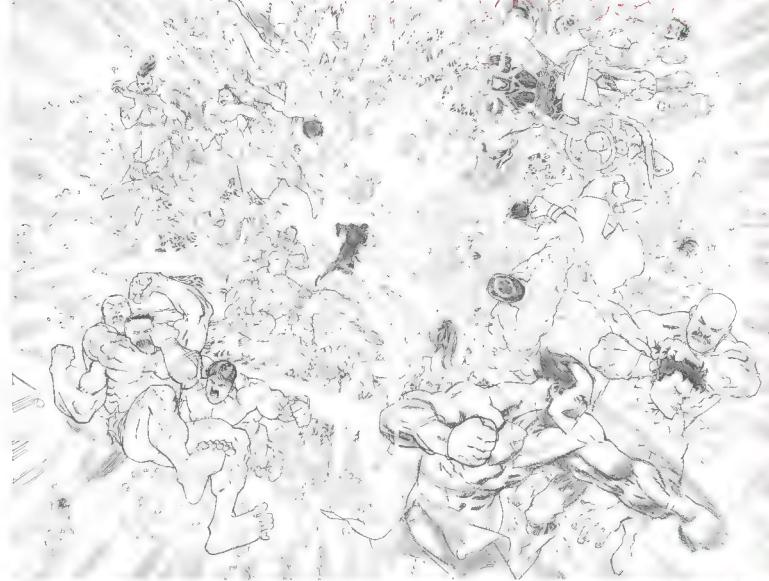
OTTLEY: Luckily we still have hundreds more issues in front of us so you can still work out all those nuts and bolts. We got time, and TONS of room! Let's do this. I know I would LOVE to see/draw more Viltrumite stories.





KIRKMAN: This series ran pretty late during this storyline. We hit a point where we either had to start taking shortcuts or just let the schedule go off the rails... I said schedule be damned, this is a story we've been building to for years, let's do it right. So that's why there are so many two-page spreads like the ones you see on this page... AMAZING.

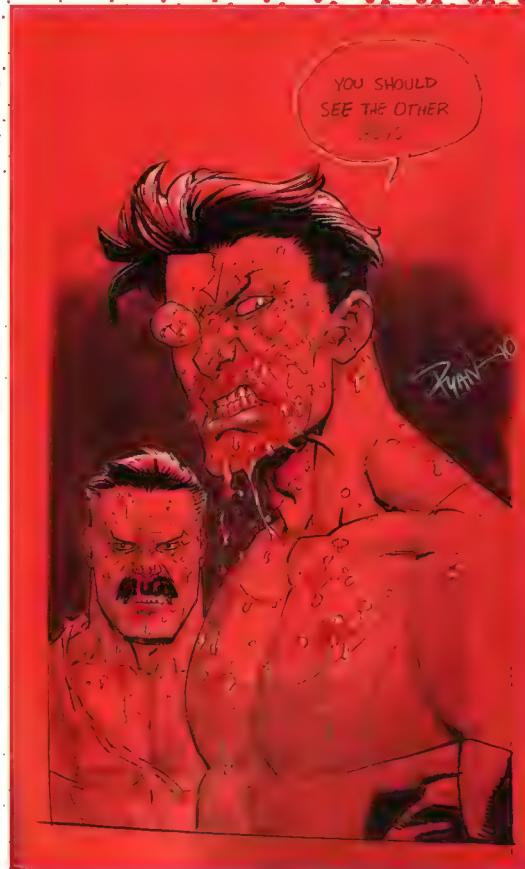
OTTLEY: Issue 75 alone took 2 months to draw. Which makes sense because it was the size of two issues, and of course packed with so many war scenes. I remember you had this idea for a while, for me to draw 4 double-page spreads. I thought you were just exaggerating. Funny thing is, you weren't, and it ended up being 6. But I agree, schedule be damned. I'm happy with how it turned out! Sometimes you gotta do an epic issue even if it's late.





KIRKMAN: Find Ryan at a convention--get awesome sketches like the ones pictured on this page.





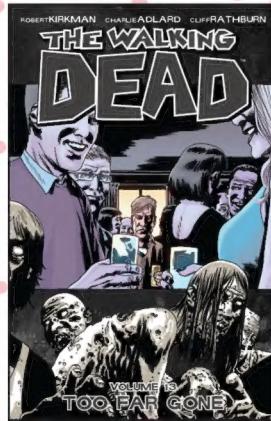
KIRKMAN: Or even awesomer sketches like these. Lord... Ryan, I'm sorry for all the zombie Invincibles you have to draw at these conventions. I feel like that's my fault.

OTTLEY: *It is your fault. But you know I love drawing zombies, right? So I'm totally fine with them. You ever need another Walking Dead back-up story you know where to find me. ;)*

KIRKMAN: That's it for us folks, thanks for buying!

OTTLEY: *Thank you all! And thanks to Robert for being an awesome writer, co-worker, and friend. Same to Cliff and FCO, thanks for making me look pretty. I got the coolest job.*

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